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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation



In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
June 28, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

2226  
~~(S)~~ While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation in his detention cell, SADDAM HUSSEIN provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ SSA Piro discussed with HUSSEIN Iraq's relationship with Al-Qaeda. HUSSEIN provided a brief historical account of conflicts between religion, specifically Islam, and historical rulers. HUSSEIN stated that he was a believer in God but was not a zealot. HUSSEIN believed that religion and government should not mix. Additionally, the Ba'ath Party ideology was not religiously based, as its founder was a Christian. However, HUSSEIN was clear that he opposed anyone who collaborated with the West against his country.

~~(S)~~ HUSSEIN stated USAMA BIN LADEN's ideology was no different than the many zealots that came before him. The two did not have the same belief or vision. HUSSEIN claimed he had never personally seen or met Bin Laden. SSA Piro advised HUSSEIN there is clear evidence the Iraqi Government had previously met with BIN LADEN. SSA Piro specifically cited FAROUQ HIJAZI's (BL #104), former IIS M-4 Director, meeting with BIN LADEN in Sudan in 1994, ABU HAFS AL-MAURITANI's two visits to Baghdad, and his request for financial assistance of ten million dollars. HUSSEIN replied "yes". HUSSEIN stated the Iraqi government did not cooperate with BIN LADEN. SSA Piro asked HUSSEIN "why not" since Iraq and BIN LADEN had the same enemies, United States and Saudi Arabia. SSA Piro then cited him the quote "my enemy's enemy is my brother". HUSSEIN replied that the United States was not Iraq's enemy, but that HUSSEIN opposed its politics. If he wanted to cooperate with the enemies of the United States, HUSSEIN would have with North Korea, which he claimed to have a relationship with, or China.

~~(S)~~ HUSSEIN stated that the United States used the 9/11 attack as a justification to attack Iraq. The United States had lost sight of the cause of 9/11. SSA Piro advised HUSSEIN that due to Iraq's contradiction between its statements and actions, many believe Iraq miscalculated the effects of the 9/11 attack on the American people and its leaders. Iraq denied having any connection with BIN LADEN or Al-Qaeda, but evidence showed

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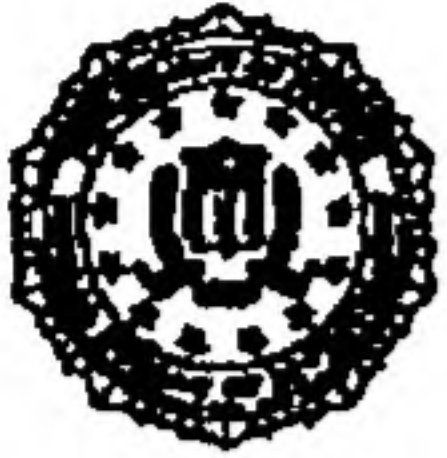
continued contact between the two. HUSSEIN denied miscalculating the effects of the attack, but he did not have any options in front of him. The only choice he was given was to leave Iraq which he claimed was not an option.

~~DS~~ SSA Piro asked HUSSEIN why was Iraq the only country to applaud the 9/11 attack, which HUSSEIN immediately denied. SSA Piro advised HUSSEIN that the Iraqi newspapers were reported to have applauded the attack. HUSSEIN stated that he wrote editorials against the attack, but also spoke of the cause which led men to commit these acts. The cause was never reviewed which could create such hatred to kill innocent people. After the attack, TARIQ AZIZ wrote personal letters denouncing the attack to two individuals, one possibly Ramsey Clarke, which AZIZ personally knew. These letters served as informal means of communications for Iraq to denounce the attack. HUSSEIN stated he could not make any formal announcement as Iraq considered itself at war with the United States. HUSSEIN was asked if that was why the request of the Iraqi Ambassador to the United Nations, MUHAMMAD AL-DURI, to attend the 9/11 memorial was denied by the Council of Four. It took the Minister of Foreign Affairs' personal request to HUSSEIN to obtain permission for the ambassador to attend the memorial. HUSSEIN stated he could not recall what transpired, but specifically remembered the ambassador attending the memorial. Again, HUSSEIN stated that the ambassador attended the memorial as a representative of the United Nations, and would not have attended as a formal representative of Iraq.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
June 17, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

~~(S)~~ While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation in his detention cell, Saddam Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein stated on most days his work schedule consisted of meeting ordinary Iraqi citizens. Hussein preferred to meet them where they worked or lived instead of his office. Normally, Hussein tried to schedule time between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. to interact with the Iraqi citizens. Hussein preferred to drive himself and would direct his protective detail to ride as passengers, which gave him the ability to stop whenever and wherever he wanted. Hussein took advantage of this time to address individual issues with citizens, which included discussions involving medical issues, personal grievances, etc.

~~(S)~~ Hussein enjoyed exchanging ideas with those around him for purposes of developing solutions. He encouraged those around him to discuss issues and exchange ideas amongst each other as well as with him. However, Hussein did not enjoy debating others, even though he considered himself an excellent debater, and superior to those around him. Whenever there were debates, Hussein stated he normally wouldn't take part, and would remain silent.

~~(S)~~ Hussein discussed individuals either related or close to him within the former Iraqi Government. Hussein stated Tariq Aziz (Black List #25) was very intelligent, and had the most knowledge regarding the West of all the Ba'ath Party officials. Aziz was an excellent speaker, as he was a former English teacher and former editor of the Ba'ath Party newspaper.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Ali Hasan Al-Majid (Black List #5) thought like an Arab. SSA Piro stated Al-Majid thought like a Bedouin, and Hussein stated that is what he meant to say. Al-Majid had limited experience outside of his tribe and his decisions were based on that limited experience. However, Al-Majid followed orders and carried out his duties as instructed.

~~(S)~~ Hussein described former Vice President, Taha Yasin Ramadan's (Black List #20) personality as open. Ramadan was the

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type of individual who continually talked about himself, which Hussein allowed him to do.

~~(S)~~ Hussein then discussed his two half brothers, Barzan Ibrahim Hasan (Black List #38) and Watban Ibrahim Hasan (Black List #37). Hussein stated Barzan was very intelligent, but had a closed personality. SSA Piro told Hussein that Barzan was not very friendly, and would not be the type of person with whom SSA Piro could develop a friendship. Hussein laughed, and stated that SSA Piro knew Barzan's personality. Hussein then stated Watban was the opposite of Barzan, friendly but simple. According to Hussein, Watban could not carry out his Ministerial duties and was not capable of handling political positions or issues.

~~(S)~~ SSA Piro inquired about Abid Hamid Mahmoud (Black List #4), Hussein's Presidential Secretary. Hussein stated Abid was a good and loyal employee who carried out his duties and orders well. Hussein then asked SSA Piro his opinion of Abid. SSA Piro described to Hussein the meaning of a "used car salesman." Hussein again laughed and stated SSA Piro was correct in his description of Abid.

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In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
June 11, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

~~(S)~~ While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation, Saddam Hussein providing the following information regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein read SSA George Piro a poem he recently wrote. SSA Piro used this opportunity as a segue to discuss Hussein's speeches. SSA Piro advised Hussein that after hearing several poems from him, SSA Piro is now able to recognize Hussein's writing style, which was prevalent in a speech SSA Piro recently read. It was clear to SSA Piro that Hussein wrote his own speeches, which he confirmed further, stating all his writings came from the heart. Hussein claimed he did not enjoy reading his speeches, preferring instead to have his speeches read by others, such as news broadcasters. Hussein described the feeling of writing his speeches and giving them was the same as taking an exam.

~~(S)~~ SSA Piro then asked Hussein if he wrote his own speeches and they come from the heart, then what was the meaning of his June 2000 speech. Hussein replied this speech was meant to serve a regional and an operational purpose. Regionally, the speech was meant to respond to Iraq's regional threat. Hussein believed that Iraq could not appear weak to its enemies, especially Iran. Iraq was being threatened by others in the region and must appear able to defend itself. Operationally, Hussein was demonstrating Iraq's compliance with the United Nations (UN) in its destruction of its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Iran was Iraq's major threat due to their common border and believed Iran intended to annex Southern Iraq into Iran. The possibility of Iran trying to annex a portion of Southern Iraq was viewed by Hussein and Iraq as the most significant threat facing Iraq. Hussein viewed the other countries in the Middle East as weak and could not defend themselves or Iraq from a attack from Iran. Hussein stated he believed Israel was a threat to the entire Arab world, not specifically Iraq.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein continued the dialogue on the issues relating to the significant threat to Iraq from Iran. Even though Hussein claimed Iraq did not have WMD, the threat from Iran was the major factor as to why he did not allow the return of the UN inspectors. Hussein stated he was more concerned about Iran discovering Iraq's weaknesses and vulnerabilities than the repercussions of the United States for his refusal to allow UN inspectors back into Iraq. In his opinion, the UN inspectors would have directly identified to the Iranians where to inflict maximum damage to Iraq. Hussein demonstrated this by pointing at his arm and stated striking someone on the forearm would not have the same effect as striking someone at the elbow or wrist, which would significantly disable the ability to use the arm. Hussein indicated he was angered when the United States struck Iraq in 1998. Hussein stated Iraq could have absorbed another United States strike for he viewed this as less of a threat than exposing themselves to Iran.

~~(S)~~ Hussein further stated that Iran's weapons capabilities have increased dramatically, while Iraq's have been eliminated by the UN sanctions. The effects of this will be seen and felt in the future, as Iran's weapons capabilities will be a greater threat to Iraq and the region in the future. Hussein stated Iraq's weapons capabilities were a factor in the outcome of the Iraq-Iran War. Initially during the war, Iraq had missiles with a limited range of approximately 270 Kilometers (km), while Iran had no viable missile capability. The Iranians obtained long-range missiles from Libya which could strike deep into Iraq. The Iranians were the first to use the missiles, and struck Baghdad. Hussein claimed he warned the Iranians through a speech he gave, to cease these attacks. But the Iranians again attacked Baghdad. Iraq's scientists came to him and advised him that they could increase the range of Iraq's missiles to also reach deep into Iran. Hussein directed them to do so. Iraq responded to Iran's attacks by striking Iran's capital, Tehran, with its own missiles. Hussein stated the Iranians were up in arms to Iraq's strikes. Hussein stated that Tehran was more vulnerable to missile strikes due to its geographical design. Baghdad, on the other hand, was geographically spread out and broken up into districts making Iran's missile strikes less effective. Hussein identified this as the "war of the cities" and Iraqi actions were in response to Iran's. At that time, Hussein recognized that Iran was at a disadvantage, as Iraq had the technology to design and develop its missiles, while Iran was

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forced to obtain its missiles from Libya. Iraq was limited only by its own production while Iran was limited by the quantity it could obtain.

~~(S)~~ Hussein recognized that Iran continued to develop its weapons capabilities, to include its WMD, while Iraq had lost its weapons capabilities due to the UN inspections and sanctions. Hussein was asked how Iraq would have dealt with the threat from Iran once the UN sanctions were lifted. Hussein replied Iraq would have been extremely vulnerable to an attack from Iran, and would have sought a security agreement with the United States to protect it from threats in the region. Hussein felt such an agreement would not only have benefitted Iraq, but its neighbors, such as Saudi Arabia. SSA Piro agreed that such an agreement would have assisted Iraq immensely. SSA Piro noted due to the history between the two countries, it would have taken some time before the United States would have entered into such an agreement with Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Further, SSA Piro advised Hussein that paragraph 14 of UN Resolution 687 states that the disarming of Iraq was part of a total disarmament of the entire region, however, that portion of the resolution was not enforceable. The threat from Iran would have loomed over Iraq, especially as Iran had continued to advance its weapons capabilities. SSA Piro commented that under those circumstances, it would appear that Iraq would have needed to reconstitute its own weapons program in response. Hussein replied that Iraq would have done what was necessary and agreed that Iraq's technical and scientific abilities exceeded others in the region.

~~(S)~~ Hussein commented he allowed the UN inspectors back into Iraq to counter allegations by the British Government. Hussein stated this was a very difficult decision to make, but the British Government had prepared a report containing inaccurate intelligence. It was this inaccurate intelligence on which the United States was making their decisions. However, Hussein admitted that when it was clear that a war with the United States was imminent, he allowed the inspectors back into Iraq in hopes of averting war. Yet, it became clear to him four months before the war that the war was inevitable.

~~(S)~~ Hussein reiterated he had wanted to have a relationship with the United States but was not given the chance,

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as the United States was not listening to anything Iraq had to say. Further, he was concerned about the United State's advanced technological capabilities and resources.

~~(S)~~ On another matter, Hussein stated he only recalls using the telephone on two occasions since March 1990. Additionally, Hussein did not stay at the same location for more than a day, as he was very aware of the United States's significant technological capabilities. Hussein communicated primarily through the use of couriers to communicate or would personally meet with government officials to discuss pertinent issues. Hussein stated that a technologically under-developed country, such as Iraq, was vulnerable to the United States.

~~(S)~~ The discussion then turned to the new interim President of Iraq, Sheikh Ghazi Al-Yawar. Hussein stated Al-Yawar came from a good family and would be favored by the other countries in the region, especially Saudi Arabia. Hussein stated it appeared the United States had put a lot of thought into Al-Yawar's appointment, as Al-Yawar was a good selection. SSA Piro told Hussein the selection of Al-Yawar was not solely made by the United States, but was a joint effort by the United States and UN. The selection of the new Iraqi Government was based on the needs voiced by the Iraqi people. The new Iraqi Government has a strong foundation on which to build on as it progresses in its work to serve the Iraqi people. SSA Piro then asked Hussein how he personally felt about their discussion of a new President and Government in Iraq. Hussein began to respond in reference to Al-Yawar, but SSA Piro stopped him and asked how he personally felt. SSA Piro reminded Hussein that he had previously made it clear to SSA Piro that he still considered himself the President of Iraq. However, it is clear now to everyone that he is no longer the President, as there is a new President who is representing the country and the people of Iraq. SSA Piro told Hussein he is no longer the President of Iraq; he was done. Hussein replied yes he knows, saying what could he do as it was God's choice. SSA Piro asked him if he had any thoughts about his future and Hussein stated that it was in God's hands. SSA Piro pointed out to Hussein that God was very busy and that God had more important issues than he and SSA Piro. Hussein agreed, at which point, SSA Piro told Hussein that his life is nearing its end, and asked him if he wanted the remainder of his life to have meaning, to which he responded yes.

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Baghdad Operations Center

(S) SSA Piro informed Hussein that he had surrounded himself with weak individuals, who are now refusing to take any responsibility for the actions of the former government. The other High Value Detainees were putting the blame for all of Iraq's mistakes on Hussein, to which Hussein replied by saying what could he do. Hussein recognizes that he may bear the responsibility or blame while others will attempt to distance themselves.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
May 13, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

~~(S)~~ While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation, Saddam Hussein providing the following information regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD):

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that the United Nations' (UN) Weapons Inspections had achieved its objectives of disposing Iraq of its WMD. Iraq does not have any WMD and has not for sometime. Hussein was advised that many were of the opinion that Iraq was reluctant to cooperate with the UN Weapons Inspections process. Hussein replied that Iraq had cooperated for seven years and granted access to the entire country to the weapons inspectors, to include the Presidential Palaces. Hussein was challenged on Iraq's cooperation, one example of which was the concealment of WMD components by Hussein Kamel. Hussein stated that Hussein Kamel's true character became known to everyone. Hussein admitted there were individuals in the Iraqi government who were initially reluctant to cooperate with the weapons inspectors. Those individuals were loyal hard working people dedicated to their work. It was difficult for them to be told one day to open all of their files and turn over all of their work and government secrets to outsiders. It took time and occurred in steps. However, by 1998 Iraq had complied with the UN resolutions; yet, Iraq was attacked at that time by the United States, without justification or the UN's authorization. Hussein further stated the Iraqis would not have stored WMD in the Presidential Palaces, as the government and the Iraqi leadership would have been at risk. WMD was and would have been stored in the desert, in remote locations. The palaces represented the sovereignty of Iraq, and it was very difficult for the Iraqis to turn over access to outsiders, but did so to demonstrate their cooperation.

~~(S)~~ Hussein claimed the strikes against Iraq by the United States in 1998 and in response to the alleged assassination attempt of former President George Bush were unprovoked and unjustified. The United States did not obtain or receive UN concurrence for either attack. Even though, both attacks were the decisions of the United States, Hussein felt the UN had exceeded its authority and charter in regards to Iraq. Hussein was reminded that Iraq was a signatory body of the UN. Hussein attempted to use the Iraqi strike against the USS Stark

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as an example to demonstrate Iraq's ability to openly admit to mistakes. Hussein claimed Iraq acknowledged the strike and its mistake. Hussein believed the UN resolutions and sanctions on Iraq were based upon the United States' position. Hussein was advised of Libya's cooperation with the UN, including their decision to dismantle their WMD; and because of this, Libya's international standing has improved and sanctions may soon be lifted. Hussein was further advised many would place the blame on Iraq for its problems as a result of its hard-line position with the UN. Hussein stated Iraq in the past had a good relationship with the United States and Iraq always wanted to maintain that relationship which would have benefitted both countries. Hussein cited that in the late fifties, the number of Iraqis trying to obtain visas for travel to the United States far surpassed the number at other embassies, including the Russian Embassy.

~~DS~~ Hussein stated WMD was for the defense of Iraq's sovereignty. Iraq demonstrated this with the use of WMD during the Iraq and Iran War, as Iran had threatened the sovereignty of Iraq. Yet, Iraq did not use WMD during the 1991 Gulf War as its sovereignty was not threatened. Iraq's neighboring Arab countries were frightened of Ayatollah Khomeini and Iran. During a meeting involving several Arab countries, Saudi Arabian officials voiced their fears concerning Iran. The Saudis stated even though the United States was their ally, the United States was too far away while Iran was on their border. Hussein claimed during this meeting, he suggested that they reach out to Ayatollah Khomeini with a peace offer, and then if Iran rose up against them, Iraq would be the first to confront Iran's aggressiveness. The others were too fearful of Iran, and Iraq was the only one who stood up to them.

~~DS~~ Hussein was reminded of a speech he gave in June, 2000, where he stated that he would not disarm until the region was disarmed; and his own words could be taken as an admission that Iraq possessed WMD. Hussein claimed his intention was for the region to be fully disarmed. Hussein was advised his speech did not project that message. He requested a copy of his speech and said he would then provide clarification. Hussein was informed the Coalition had gathered information indicating that Iraq was either maintaining or re-developing its WMD capability. Hussein denied this. He was then asked if others within his country would do this without his knowledge. Hussein said no,

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Baghdad Operations Center

and claimed on several occasions he held meetings with all of his ministers and asked them specifically if Iraq had WMD that he was unaware of. All of his ministers stated no, as they cited they knew Hussein's position on WMD matters clearly. Hussein claimed his position was that Iraq did not have WMD.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

Baghdad Operations Center  
May 10, 2004

~~(S)~~ While engaging SSA George L. Piro in casual conversation in his detention cell, Saddam Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Hussein inquired on current events in Iraq. Hussein was advised of the accomplishments in Iraq, to include the signing of the new constitution, and the preparations for the turn over of sovereignty to the Iraqis. Hussein questioned the effectiveness of the Governing Council (GC), in his view the GC could agree among themselves to make decisions. Hussein was advised of the eventual elections in Iraq, in which the Iraqi people will have the opportunity to democratically elect a new leader. Hussein stated that the Iraqi people would not accept an elected leader during occupation and has experienced this in the past when King Faisal was brought to power under British power. SSA Piro described to Hussein the recent poll of Iraqis in which the Iraqi people want control over their government, but want United States forces to remain in Iraq.

~~(S)~~ While talking about the air conditioning in Hussein's cell, which was being repaired at that time, Hussein advised that he is used to living simply and personally does not like an extravagant lifestyle. Hussein was then questioned about the number of palaces and their extravagant nature. Hussein stated that the palaces belong to the nation and not to one person. Before 1968, the Iraqi homes were basically very primitive and made out of mud. As in western countries, historically architects developed their skill and designs by building castles. The palaces gave Iraqi architects the opportunity to develop their skills which could then be seen in the improvement of the design of the typical Iraqi home. Additionally, there was a threat from the United States and Israel, especially during the last ten years. For the government to function, the leadership had to meet and discuss issues prior to rendering decisions. If there were only two palaces or locations that the leadership could meet, it would have been very easy for the elimination of the Iraqi leadership. However, with twenty palaces, it was much more difficult to track or identify the location of the Iraqi leadership. Since these palaces belonged to the nation, Hussein did not live in them and

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preferred to live in a simple home. Hussein would eat what was prepared for his protection detail and did not have a lot of demands. Hussein believed the United States had a misconception that he had an extravagant lifestyle, which lead to his ability to evade capture. Hussein believes his capture was solely caused by betrayal.

(S) Hussein's work schedule was long, but he would set time aside for fictional reading, something he enjoyed very much. His days would include meetings with the other senior Ba'ath Party members. Hussein claimed he regularly met with the Iraqi people as he found them to be the best source of accurate information. Hussein would meet with citizens daily, or every other day. When asked, how could he be certain that the citizens were honest during their discussions, as most would have been afraid? Hussein replied that this could have been the case, but he had a extremely long relationship with the Iraqi people and the population knew he sought the truth. Hussein gave an example involving his half-brother, Watban Ibrahim Hasan Al-Majid, the Minister of Interior at the time. A citizen reported to Hussein that while stopped at a traffic light, Watban fired his pistol at the traffic light. Hussein contacted Watban to determine if this was true. Watban acknowledged it was. Hussein then told him to pack his things, allowing him to learn of his removal from Hussein instead of the state news radio. Hussein claimed that he held his family at a higher standard than others.

(S) Hussein indicated he was interested in understanding the American culture, and did so by watching American movies. According to Hussein, he watched numerous American films, from these he developed his opinion of the American culture.

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DATE: 05-27-2009  
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DECLASSIFY ON: 05-27-2034

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U.S. Department of Justice



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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
May 1, 2004

Interview Session Number: 20  
Interview Conducted By: SSA George L. Piro  
SA [redacted]  
SSA [redacted]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [redacted]

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b7C

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed May 1, 2004, at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

(S) [redacted]

(S) [redacted]

(S) [redacted]

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 30, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

Interview Session Number: 19  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [redacted]

b6  
b7C

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 30, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of the interview, Hussein was advised that today's session would be a continuation of the discussions regarding the Marsh Arabs of southern Iraq.

~~(S)~~ As stated in a previous interview, Hussein acknowledged that he had lived with the Marsh Arabs for a short period of time. When Hussein was in Egypt in the early 1960s, he hoped that it was "God's will" that he would return to Iraq. Upon returning, Hussein attempted to expand his own knowledge of Iraq through actual experience in areas of the country where he had never spent significant time including the mountains and the marshes. Hussein described life in the marshes of southern Iraq as "enchanted for any human being." The summers, however, were not pleasant due to the oppressive heat and humidity as well as the presence of insects.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the drainage of the marshes conducted by the Iraqi government, Hussein stated that one was faced with the choice of preserving nature at the expense of humans or sacrificing a bit of nature for the sake of humans. Hussein noted that the water in the inhabited parts of the marshes was not always clean due to human and animal pollution. The inhabitants of the marshes drank this water and bathed in it. As a result, illness was prevalent including widespread bilharziasis, an intestinal disease. Life expectancy was relatively low. Hussein stated the Iraqi government could not simply "sit back and watch this misery." He added that the government decided to "bring them inside life" or to modernize the Marsh Arabs way of life. Hussein reiterated the difficult

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choice of the Iraqi government to preserve the simple, primitive life of the Marsh inhabitants or to bring them within the framework of modern life where a human is not "disgraced or insulted."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that all of Iraq is beautiful and again described the marshes as "enchanted." He added, "I slept there for days in 1981 and 1982." During that time period, Hussein stated he would travel to the front lines of the Iran-Iraq War in the morning, then return to the marshes in the evening upon completion of his duties. Hussein described this period as "the best of days." He claimed that he spent parts of each year from 1978-84 visiting the marshes.

~~(S)~~ Hussein described his visit in 1980 of a village called Baida located in the middle of the marshes. According to information, residents of Baida attacked a police station. Hussein stated this was not a matter to handle in a simple fashion. He traveled to Baida in a party of three boats, one carrying Hussein and others, one carrying his protective detail, and one carrying "news people." This event was filmed and shown on television. According to Hussein, the residents of Baida were "happy to see us." They slaughtered animals and prepared a meal thinking Hussein and his entourage would stay for dinner. However, the group only remained for a three hours then departed. Hussein never asked the residents of Baida whether they attacked a police station. At the time, Hussein was questioned by a member of his protective detail regarding the necessity for an investigation of the participation of the residents of Baida in the attack. In response, he stated, "Good people understood me. The evil ones also got the message." Hussein added that if a similar act had subsequently occurred, they would be "dealt with properly."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that the Iraqi government had good relations with the Marsh Arabs. However, upon entry of a foreigner into the situation, "it becomes bad." Hussein asserted that some of the Marsh Arabs were corrupted by Iran. In particular, the area of the Hweiza marshes became a smuggling route beginning during the time of the Shah of Iran. Hussein suggested that the family seen in the video previously shown by the interviewer was from Hweiza.

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(S) Hussein stated the Iraqi government chose to drain the marshes for the sake of the inhabitants and for strategic reasons for Iraq. He reiterated the Iraqi government wanted to modernize the way of life for the Marsh Arabs so that they would "not live like animals." Hussein believed it was unfit for an Iraqi to live in these conditions. The drainage of the marshes was also conducted for a strategic purpose. Only one road existed connecting Basra to Amarah to Baghdad. At points, this road was completely surrounded by the marshes. When the Iranians entered Iraq in 1984, their main goal was to cut off this road and to isolate Basra. Accordingly, the Iraqi government decided to drain the marshes and build a detour providing a secondary route.

(S) The Iraqi government studied the idea of building homes in the marshes for the inhabitants. However, research showed that this project would be too expensive and complicated particularly in the areas of sewage and electricity. As a result, the idea was abandoned and the government decided to build housing complexes on dry land for the displaced Marsh Arabs. The residents were also offered monetary allowances to build their own homes. Hussein stated that the government provided water, electricity, health care services, and schools for the inhabitants. Previously, teachers and medical professionals would refuse to enter the marshes unless paid three to four times their normal salaries.

(S) Hussein described the marshes as "nice to visit for two, three, or four days." In the summer, however, mosquitos would "eat you" and life was very harsh. Hussein acknowledged that humans have a need for primitive life, but only for a few days at a time. He added that the older man previously seen in the film commenting about the Marsh Arabs "came as a visitor, but did not live there" nor did his wife and children.

(S) Hussein suggested that the interviewer talk to personnel of the Iraqi Ministry of Irrigation in order to understand how the drainage was implemented. He added that the task was accomplished within three to four months. Regarding the individual or individuals who designed and supervised the marsh drainage, Hussein stated the Iraqi government utilized the entities with the most expertise and the necessary equipment. The project included the involvement of the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Irrigation and possibly the City of Baghdad. The

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"entire nation" and many of its experts participated in the drainage of the marshes. When noted to Hussein that Muhammad Hamza Al-Zubaidi claimed to be the "architect" of the marsh drainage who first proposed such a plan to the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) in 1991, Hussein responded, "Maybe." Hussein stated, however, that he received the first plan and proposal from Hussein Kamil. He is unaware whether Kamil consulted with Al-Zubaidi regarding the project. Similarly, Hussein denied knowledge whether Al-Zubaidi discussed the marsh drainage with other Iraqi leaders. He added, "If he (Al-Zubaidi) said this, he is being truthful." The interviewer told Hussein that others had also claimed to be the originators of the idea of the drainage of the marshes. Hussein replied that it is understandable that any Iraqi might attempt to take credit for such an important task that improved the lives of the Marsh Arabs while simultaneously cutting off the path of a foe such as Iran.

~~(S)~~ When questioned about reports of the presence of Iraqi army deserters and saboteurs in the marshes in 1991 and steps taken by the Iraqi government to deal with these individuals, Hussein acknowledged the existence of deserters. As typical for any protracted conflict, some individuals decide to abandon their duties. This has occurred in the past and continues to occur today during war. For a deserter, the Iraqi law is applied or the individual is pardoned by the appropriate authority. Hussein stated that the presence of deserters in the marshes of southern Iraq was not a contributing factor which led to the drainage.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that saboteurs began using the marshes after 1991. The response of the Iraqi government was "the same as that of any government against those who violate the law." Hussein could provide no example of a government response to saboteur activity. He denied that a military plan existed for confronting saboteurs and deserters. He stated that deserters were typically pursued by the police, local citizens, and family members. In cases of mutiny such as that which existed in 1991, Hussein stated the army would intervene. Hussein acknowledged that there were probably times when the Iraqi military had to deal with saboteurs.

~~(S)~~ When questioned whether the historical value of the marshes was considered prior to the drainage, Hussein asked

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whether similar consideration was given to the area where the High Dam was built in Egypt. He added that ruins located in the area of the dam were moved prior to construction. Hussein opined that some discussion most likely took place regarding issues concerning the movement of the stones versus saving the people from starvation. He stated that the matter of the drainage of the marshes "was studied" and "there is no historical value of the marshes."

(S) Regarding any consideration given by the Iraqi government to the environmental impact of the drainage of the marshes, Hussein replied that he could debate this matter with experts for "the next twenty days." He noted that Americans did not allow the Indians to live as they had existed prior to colonization. He asked what laws are in place which prohibit American and European companies from destroying the jungles of the Amazon, which he described as the "lungs of the earth." Hussein asked, "Do we preserve species of birds and other animals or do we worry about the existence of Iraqis?" He further asked whether the water of the marshes should have been wasted for the sake of preserving the marshes or used for agriculture. Hussein stated, "What we did was correct." He added, if not, Americans should reopen the water now. The interviewer noted that a recent news article reported local Iraqi citizens did, in fact, recently collect money, rented a bulldozer, and opened a part of the canal in order to allow water to flow back into the marshes.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 28, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

Interview Session Number: 18  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [REDACTED]

b6  
b7c

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 28, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of the interview, Hussein was advised that today's discussion would be a continuation of the previous meetings regarding the Shia uprisings in southern Iraq in 1991.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that it is natural for the leader of a political party, such as the Ba'ath, to attempt to know as many members of the party as possible. For Hussein, however, it was difficult to become acquainted with Ba'ath Party members outside of the senior leadership. Nevertheless, Hussein attempted to know as many members of the Party as possible, just as he tried to meet many individuals of the general population of Iraq.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer asked about the communication system between the various levels of the Party from the local to the national level and how much information the Iraqi senior leadership actually saw. Hussein stated that the Iraqi senior leaders received information regarding their Party much in the same manner as Democrats and Republicans in America. When a directive was issued by the leadership, instructions were sent to all Party members. When a Party member desired a certain action, a request was submitted through the appropriate channels to the Iraqi leadership. Hussein was questioned about his feelings regarding the importance of Party members informing him of the local situation. He stated, "There is a difference between desire and what is possible."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer stated that a number of documents describing the 1991 uprisings and Ba'ath Party activities during

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this period were recovered after the invasion of coalition forces in 2003. The translator read to Hussein portions of copies of two documents written in Arabic. One document, dated April 11, 1991, described as report number 7/1/383, signed by Hussein Hamza Abbas, Secretary General of the Saddam Section Command, was sent to the Secretary General of the Wasit Section Command. According to the document, Abbas wrote the letter to explain and clarify his conduct during the "disturbances" of March, 1991. The second document, dated April, 1991, bearing no report number, signed by Anwar Saeed Omar, Secretary General of the Wasit Section Command, was directed to an unstated, but presumably, higher command element. This document explains certain actions taken during "disturbances" in the cities of Basra and Wasit in March, 1991 including the arrest of approximately 700 military and civilian suspects in Basra. In the letter, Omar states that interrogation committees were formed and that he was put in charge of the Second Corps Committee. Omar writes that he personally executed two individuals on the same day he began interrogations. He further states that an additional forty-two individuals were executed after four more days of interrogation.

~~TS~~ When questioned about the seeming contradiction in the actions described in these documents and Iraq's justice system, Hussein asked, "Where is the contradiction?" He added that committees were formed, questioning occurred, and judgement was passed. Hussein asked, "What was the alternative?"

~~TS~~ The interviewer noted to Hussein that the documents appear to describe a situation where individuals were not investigated by a neutral entity. The necessity of a neutral investigative body was previously discussed by Hussein with respect to the situation in Kuwait and crimes reportedly committed by the Iraqi military during occupation of the country in 1991. The interviewer further noted that the individuals appeared not to have the chance to defend themselves, as also previously mentioned by Hussein as being important. Hussein stated, "I did not say anything about Kuwaitis." He commented that Kuwait and this issue are "two different things." These documents discuss acts of "treachery and sabotage." Hussein stated that it appears that the individuals did have a chance to defend themselves. The interviewer noted that it appears the two individuals mentioned were not given the opportunity to defend themselves and were executed on the spot. Hussein responded, "Possibly. Possibly not." He added that this is a report which

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may not have included all the details. Hussein stated the author may have been simply bragging to show his loyalty and ability to accomplish a task. He questioned the validity of this report. If true, Hussein stated that when the time comes and America decides to place the individuals captured for these crimes on trial and Iraqis have resumed leadership of the country, Iraqis will investigate this matter.

~~(S)~~ Hussein questioned what right the interviewer had to ask about internal Iraqi events of 1991. He asked, "Is it because you are an employee of the American government?" The interviewer noted that he is attempting to separate fact from fiction and to record history as it occurred.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that it was difficult to comment on the referenced documents without the full details. He questioned the interviewer's assertion that the two individuals discussed in the one document were not allowed to defend themselves. Hussein further questioned whether the individuals were even executed.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 23, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

Interview Session Number: 17  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [REDACTED]

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b7C

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 23, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of the interview, Hussein was advised that today's discussion would be a continuation of the previous meeting. He was informed this discussion would include the viewing of the remaining portion of a documentary regarding the situation in southern Iraq in 1991 in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. Made in 1993, the film is titled "Saddam Hussein's Latest War" and is narrated by British commentator Michael Wood. The interviewer began today's viewing of the documentary approximately twenty-two minutes and thirty seconds into the program.

~~(S)~~ Hussein questioned the source of the figure 300,000 provided by a speaker in the documentary as the estimated number of Shias killed in southern Iraq by the Iraqi government. The interviewer noted that this figure had been discussed during the portion of the documentary viewed in the previous session and its source was the Iraqi government. According to the film, the Iraqi government informed the Kurds that this number of Shias had been killed. The interviewer added that this message from the Iraqi government is believed to have been intended as a warning to the Kurds not to defy the government.

~~(S)~~ The film depicted scenes of Iraqi government actions against the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq including the poisoning of water resulting in the killing of fish, the destruction of villages, and the draining of the marshes. Hussein commented that some of the scenes shown did not appear to have been filmed at the site of the marshes. As the documentary continued, one scene showed a Marsh Arab female commenting on the

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treatment of her people by the Iraqi government. She stated that they had nothing left and had to leave their homes with only a few possessions. Hussein laughed and asked, "What did she have before? Reeds?"

~~(S)~~ The documentary then showed additional scenes and provided commentary about the Iraqi government's treatment of the Shias in southern Iraq, the Kurds in northern Iraq, and the Marsh Arabs. The film discussed the possibility of placing Hussein on trial for these atrocities. Hussein stated, "Now that they have apprehended me, let them put me on trial."

~~(S)~~ The film then ended after a total of approximately fifty-five minutes and fifty seconds. Upon asking the interviewer, Hussein was informed this documentary was made in 1993.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the assignment of certain senior Iraqi leaders to positions in southern Iraq in 1991 who would bear the responsibility of dealing with the Shia uprising, Hussein stated, "We assigned responsibility to whoever was going to handle the situation." Hussein denied that he previously stated he did not want to know the details of how the uprising would be stopped and that he only wanted to know the results. Hussein asked, "Who says I did not want to know how?" Upon being informed by the interviewer that Hussein made this previous assertion, he stated that any person's main goal would have been to stop the disturbances and to end the "treason."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer noted that this documentary shows the cost, human and otherwise, of stopping the treason. Hussein stated that nothing was shown in this film. According to Hussein, it shows individuals who were apprehended by the Iraqi government and some government officials who "behaved in a wrong manner when they struck them." He acknowledged that the documentary shows scenes of other topics.

~~(S)~~ The conversation turned to a discussion about the definition of treason versus a revolution. The interviewer reminded Hussein that he had observed a portion of the film in the previous session claiming that President Bush encouraged the Shia to revolt against the Iraqi government in 1991. The interviewer further reminded him that Hussein previously stated that the Shia, after Bush's encouragement, turned against their

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own country and that Hussein previously stated he considered the Shia to be traitors. The interviewer noted that some would describe the Ba'ath Party in the same fashion regarding various coup attempts and successful coups in 1959, 1963, and 1968. The interviewer further noted to Hussein that some describe a failed uprising as treason, while a successful one is viewed as a revolution. Hussein stated, "I do not have a comment." He added that it was "beneath him" to comment about this documentary. Hussein characterized the film as not being objective and opined that it was made as further justification for "what was being done against Iraq" including the partitioning of the country.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that an accused individual should be allowed to defend himself. He asked whether Iraq was afforded the opportunity to defend itself regarding the information in this film. Hussein questioned the appropriateness of interviewing the President of Iraq about such a "propaganda film." He added, "We should stop this program." Hussein asserted that he had answered all of the interviewer's questions. He affirmed that he would not comment on such propaganda films.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Muhammad Hamza Al-Zubaidi and Kamal Mustapha Abdallah were sent to Nasiriyah in 1991 to confront the Shia uprising in that area. Similarly, Hussein Kamil was sent to Karbala, Ali Hasan Al-Majid was sent to Basra, and Izzat Ibrahim Al-Duri was sent to Al-Hilla.

~~(S)~~ Hussein described Al-Zubaidi as a "comrade in our party" who had reached the leadership position of Prime Minister. Hussein stated that he considers every Iraqi to be a good person until that person demonstrates otherwise to him. He characterized Al-Zubaidi as "good." Hussein acknowledged that Al-Zubaidi was one of the few Shia in the Iraqi senior leadership. When asked whether Al-Zubaidi was respected by his colleagues, Hussein stated, "That is another thing, something different." Hussein refused to explain this comment any further. He added, as previously stated, that he will only say good things about his comrades. Based upon Hussein's answer, the interviewer stated that one might presume that Al-Zubaidi was not in good standing with his colleagues. Hussein replied that the interviewer could presume as he wished, positively or negatively, about Al-Zubaidi. He added, "I gave my answer."

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~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Abdallah was a distant cousin and member of the Ba'ath Party. He stated that Abdallah served as an officer in the Iraqi Army but was not "in the government." Abdallah assumed the same duties as any other military officer in the army. Hussein stated that he does not remember the location of Abdallah's assignments. When asked whether Abdallah held the position of Secretary General of the Republican Guard (RG) and Special Republican Guard (SRG), Hussein replied, "I thought the questions related to what happened in the South." The interviewer noted that Hussein's perspective on members of the Iraqi leadership is important. Hussein reiterated that he has faith and trust in anyone, whether in the party, the government, or the military, until that person "behaves badly." He added that if he does not describe someone as "bad" that means the person is good. Hussein further characterized a "bad" person as someone who behaves in a manner contrary to the trust existing between him and the person.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that during the war with Iran, the RG assumed duties on the front lines leaving Baghdad and the Presidential Palace unguarded. Thus, the SRG was formed, first of companies, then with regiments. At that time, many young officers served in the SRG including Abdallah. He would later become commander of the SRG. However, the commanders of the SRG and RG were not necessarily Hussein's relatives. Abdallah was one of the many individuals in the Iraqi leadership. Hussein stated that Abdallah performed his duties as would any other officer.

~~(S)~~ When questioned about the instructions given by the Iraqi leadership to Al-Zubaidi and Abdallah regarding the response necessary for the Shia uprising in southern Iraq, Hussein stated, "I explained during the last meeting." Hussein added that during the last session he also explained how information regarding the situation in southern Iraq in 1991 was communicated back to the Iraqi leadership. The interviewer noted to Hussein that Al-Zubaidi and Abdallah are in the custody of coalition forces. Hussein stated, "What do I want from them?" He asked rhetorically, "Do you think I would answer based upon who is in custody?" He added, "I am afraid of no one. I am only afraid of God." Hussein stated his answers are not based upon who is in custody but upon what he believes to be the truth. His answers are not dependent upon who is alive or dead. Hussein stated that he is not the type person who would blame someone

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because that person is dead, such as blaming the late Hussein Kamil. He added, "I will only talk about myself." Hussein recommended that the interviewer talk directly to Al-Zubaidi and Abdallah as they "know themselves better."

~~(S)~~ Hussein reiterated a statement made during a previous interview saying "any person answering you who, if it lessened their burden, and it does not harm my reputation, I will accept."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer ended the questioning telling Hussein that he did not wish to further delay his (Hussein's) prayer and meal time. Hussein stated, "Any government, if it is to lessen its sins in the eyes of God, then it should do so." He added, "The sins of a government are not few." Hussein ended the session saying that it was good that the interviewer did not prevent him from praying, as this would be one less sin.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 19, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

Interview Session Number: 16  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 19, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of the interview, Hussein was advised that today's discussion would include the viewing of a documentary regarding the situation in southern Iraq in 1991 in the aftermath of the first Gulf War.

~~(S)~~ Hussein provided comments before viewing the documentary. He stated that each person presents information from a certain background, based upon his beliefs and life experiences. Despite having his own opinion, a person is affected by the thoughts of others. Any person presenting information on Iraq or any other country speaks from three viewpoints. The first is a "divine scale" according to his own beliefs. The second is a scale based upon his life experiences in his own country. The third and final viewpoint is based upon what is known by the person regarding information from the United Nations (UN) and international law. Hussein then asked the interviewer, "What is your scale as you show the film?" Hussein offered that this information would enable him to comment and answer questions in the best manner.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer told Hussein that one must listen to all the facts and find the truth. Hussein asked, "How will you know the truth?" He added that the interviewer would be using western media, possibly biased, to determine the truth. Hussein stated, "Your army occupies my country. You are free. I am a prisoner." He added that one who searches for the truth must directly contact the people who were involved in the matter of concern. In the instance of southern Iraq in 1991 after the war, Hussein stated one would have to speak to "those who were

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violated, such as women," by those who were sent by Iran. Those same individuals sent by Iran committed other acts in southern Iraq including looting, burning, and killing. Hussein stated that one should contact others who share his (Hussein's) opinion.

(S) Hussein opined that a documentary such as this, prepared in the west and first broadcast in America, is not a neutral film produced by neutral individuals. He added that the film is likely based upon the teachings of Christ, the laws of the United States, international law, and life in the United States. Hussein emphasized that he did not want to put the interviewer in a difficult position. He added that the interviewer must "learn the truth as it is" not as Hussein tells it, nor as the film producers tell it.

(S) The interviewer then started the approximate one hour documentary. Hussein stated that the scene showing Shias in southern Iraq "could be seen anywhere, even now." He stated that the Shias shown in Karbala in the mosque were not confined and surrounded, as depicted. In reference to the reporter's words regarding scenes showing Iraqi tanks approaching the mosque, Hussein asked, "Where are the tanks?" He added that a statement in the documentary indicating that President Bush "encouraged" the Shias to rise up against the Iraqi government is "a confession of the crime."

(S) Hussein asked various questions including the date of the documentary, the name of the commentator, and the name of the non-governmental organization for whom the reporter worked.

(S) Regarding the scene showing Shias who had fled southern Iraq and traveled to Kurdish territory in northern Iraq, Hussein stated these individuals "do not appear to be scared, they appear to be happy." He added that these individuals looked Kurdish, not Shia.

(S) After viewing approximately 23 minutes of the documentary, Hussein stated that his exercise time and prayer time had arrived. When the interviewer noted to Hussein that his exercise period could be postponed until later in the day, he replied, "I think it is enough so far." Hussein added that the documentary could be viewed another day and asked, "Why rush?"

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(S) Hussein then provided several comments without further prompting or questioning. He noted that the documentary states the Shia rose up against the Iraqi government with the encouragement of President Bush. Hussein stated that the "traitors rose up at the order of a foreign country" and declared war on their own country.

(S) Hussein stated that the interview of Shia Ayatollah Khoei demonstrates a contradiction in the truth. According to the commentator, Khoei believes in the peaceful aspect of his religion. Hussein stated Khoei's reply to commentator questioning indicates he does not agree with the mixing of politics and terror/violence. According to Hussein, this is in direct contradiction to the actions of the Shia.

(S) Regarding the film's depiction of Shia conduct, Hussein reiterated "we can see this anywhere." Hussein stated that if an insurgent does not surrender his weapon, he will be confronted with force. He added that the Shia used the Imam Hussein shrine in Karbala as a headquarters for their resistance. Hussein stated that the blood shown on the inside walls of the shrine was from Iraqi "comrades" executed in the building and not from Shias killed during an Iraqi government assault.

(S) Hussein stated that the individual shown in the film whose tongue was reportedly cut out may have simply been a mute. The documentary provided no information about why or who cut his tongue, other than Iraqi military intelligence.

(S) Hussein opined that the Kurdish individuals shown walking and departing their villages may have been "migrating." He added that they may have been moving to avoid a combat zone.

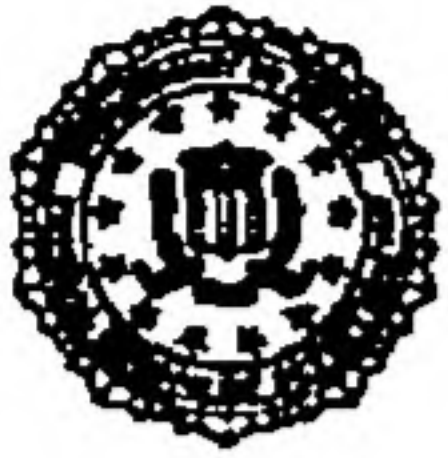
(S) Hussein asked whether the commentator questioned the Shias regarding the things they lost when the "criminals came and occupied their city." He stated that he felt sorry for someone who watches this documentary and does not know the truth. Hussein asked rhetorically, "How would someone know the Shia would act this way about something that happened 1300 years ago?"

(S) Hussein agreed to continue viewing the documentary and to provide his comments at a later date.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 16, 2004

Interview Session Number:  
Interview Conducted by:  
Arabic/English Translation:

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 16, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of the interview, Hussein was advised that today's discussion would be a continuation of the previous conversation regarding the disturbances or uprisings in southern Iraq in 1991 after the Gulf War.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that he was made aware of the details regarding the situation in southern Iraq in the same fashion as any leader of a country. Whenever faced with a situation, the Iraqi leadership assembled and consulted "quickly" about the best manner in which to confront an issue.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that, initially, those who carried out acts during the uprisings in southern Iraq were among "those who had crossed the border from Iran." Others from Iraq committed similar acts, while some were not involved at all in the incidents. According to Hussein, if the Iraqi government response to these actions had been slow and weak, some individuals might have shown sympathy and assisted the participants in the uprisings. Without such a response, they might have acted out of fear thinking that those who caused the disturbances would ultimately rise to power in the Iraqi government. In addition, other individuals Hussein described as "greedy thieves and robbers" might have participated in the uprisings.

~~(S)~~ Hussein asserted that it was the duty of the Iraqi government to confront the individuals participating in the uprisings. Hussein stated that although the "arms of the authorities had been severed" by the 1991 war, the Iraqi

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government "picked them up and struck the enemy." He added that those who would not be deterred by words would be deterred by weapons. The Iraqi leadership ordered the army to assemble as many forces as possible in order to confront "treachery" and the disturbances. Hussein acknowledged that incidents of looting by certain individuals "got mixed in" with the actions of those participating in the uprisings.

~~IS~~ Regarding the decision to place certain individuals in charge of areas in southern Iraq during this time period and their assigned roles, Hussein replied, "I said our decision was to confront and defeat the enemy." The participants in the uprisings were to be "put in their place," if not by word, then by weapon. Hussein stated that a lengthy discussion of this matter was not required. The individuals who had crossed the border from Iran were members of the Dawa Party. They were assisted by additional Iranian forces. Together, these individuals killed, burned, looted, and committed other crimes. According to Hussein, one does not need to ask what actions should be taken when faced with such a situation. Procedure, however, dictated that the Iraqi leadership meet to discuss the matter. All members of the leadership held the same opinion regarding the Iraqi government response required to deal with the situation.

~~IS~~ When asked how information was communicated to him regarding events occurring in southern Iraq and regarding subsequent responses by Iraqi government forces, Hussein asked, "With Iraq being so small, is it possible we wouldn't know what was going on?" He added that the entire population of southern Iraq began migrating to Baghdad during this time period. Information from one of the Iraqi commanders in the south, Ali Hasan Al-Majid, was "cut off" and was not reaching the Iraqi leadership. Soon after, it became clear to the leadership that Al-Majid was "resisting" in Basra.

~~IS~~ When asked whether reports were true that Al-Majid was actually trapped in Basra at this time, Hussein responded, "In the past, Iraqis did not respect law and authority." When called to military service, Iraqis generally failed to respond. When called for "questioning," Iraqis also generally failed to respond. According to Hussein, national rule was a relatively new concept during this time period. Even though most Iraqis were Arab, they were not accustomed to being ruled by an Arab,

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King Faisal at that time. He was "installed" into power by the British. The disregard for law was particularly prevalent in rural areas at that time.

~~(S)~~ Hussein then provided details of a story about an individual named Madhi Ubaid and his son who was wanted by the government. As the result of a police operation, Ubaid was captured and interrogated regarding the whereabouts of his son. Ubaid responded, "I have no son." The police asked, "Are you Madhi?" Ubaid replied, "No, I'm Fadhi." The police slapped him and told Ubaid "You are Madhi." Thereafter, Ubaid stated, "If the government says I'm Madhi, I'm Madhi." Hussein ended the discussion of Al-Majid's situation in Basra stating, "You heard what you heard. I heard what I heard."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that the threat to the Iraqi government in 1991 existed in both northern and southern Iraq. An uprising was even attempted in Baghdad. Hussein opined that those "sitting on the fence" joined in the uprisings upon seeing police stations and government offices attacked with no resistance by the authorities. As the Iraqi government reasserted control, the "enemy" went to a new area or reinforced in an old one. According to Hussein, the Iraqi military strength grew over time and "the circle started tightening around the enemy."

~~(S)~~ Hussein noted that the previous period of lawlessness he discussed, during Madhi's time, was in the 1920s. He added that the attitude of the Iraqis changed completely during the last 35 years under the Ba'ath Party. In Hussein's opinion, with a political party present throughout Iraq, the Iraqi people believed in the government agenda, had faith in their leadership, and were more disciplined than ever before. This led to an improvement in the situation in Iraq, particularly in the economy. According to Hussein, no "poor person" existed in Iraq in the 1980s. Widows, orphans, and the elderly were "taken care of and secure." Commercial products were relatively inexpensive. This Iraqi lifestyle diminished, however, around the midpoint of the Iran-Iraq War and later after the 1991 Gulf War. Hussein stated, "An embargo is an embargo." After the downturn in the economy, employees, and Iraqi citizens in general, were less disciplined. However, their allegiance did not change.

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Baghdad Operations Center

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Iraq was on its way to becoming economically strong in the early 1980s. He added that all the positive things in Iraq had been created by the leadership. Hussein further acknowledged that the economic situation deteriorated dramatically in the 1980s. Hussein agreed that the decline in the Iraqi economy at that time and the subsequent 1991 Gulf War which led to embargos and United Nations (UN) inspections lessened the economic strength of the country. He acknowledged that this decline was felt by the Iraqi people, especially among those in rural areas and among lower income individuals such as those living in southern Iraq. Hussein added that the central and northern areas of Iraq were also affected.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that, as a general rule, the pressures of poverty can greatly strain a society possibly leading to revolution. However, he provided several examples of situations involving revolutions in Iraq and other countries in the Arab world which did not stem from economic conditions. Hussein stated that acts of insurgency without a political goal, such as those which occurred in 1991, are not revolutions.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer noted to Hussein that various neutral non-governmental and humanitarian organizations conducted investigations of the actions of the Iraqi military during the uprisings of 1991. One such investigation conducted by Human Rights Watch (HRW), a neutral non-profit organization not associated with any government, provided details about Iraqi military actions. The interviewer read Hussein a summary of an HRW interview of a resident of Basra who witnessed one such event in 1991. According to the witness, he saw a column of Iraqi tanks approaching Basra. The lead tank had three children tied to its front being forced to act as human shields. When questioned regarding his knowledge of such actions of the Iraqi military in 1991, Hussein replied that even though he believes this information does not deserve a reply, he would answer for the benefit of the interviewer. Hussein stated, "It's a lie." He added that, in Iraq, each child has a father, a mother, and family. Iraq "does not have orphans walking the streets." Regarding these three children, Hussein asked, "Who were their parents?" He questioned why the interviewer would accept that a tank commander would act so irresponsibly. Hussein further asked why the tactic of using children as human shields would have been considered effective against those who were already killing, looting, and burning. He added that a story about using children

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in this manner may have been fabricated by westerners. Hussein reiterated that the story did not deserve an answer from him and "the lie is clear."

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 13, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-21-2009

Interview Session Number: 14  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [REDACTED]

b6  
b7c

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 13, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ After the cease fire of 1991, Hussein stated the goal of the Iraqi leadership was the rebuilding of the infrastructure of Iraq destroyed during the war. This included reconstituting agricultural and economic programs. Hussein stated that Iraq rebuilt "almost everything" and started new programs in the areas of agriculture, education, and health. However, Iraq's efforts were hampered by the embargo, particularly affecting the health and education sectors.

~~(S)~~ When noted to Hussein that several changes were made in the Iraqi government around this time including the appointment of individuals to new positions, Hussein stated, "This is natural." In his opinion, such changes are a "regular" occurrence not only in Iraq but also in countries such as the United States. One such appointee, Abid Hamid Mahmoud, became Hussein's personal secretary at this time replacing the previous secretary who had been appointed as Iraqi Minister of Education. Hussein referred to Mahmoud as a "senior companion of mine" who had served as a member of the President's protective detail in the Himaya and Murafiqaen. Another individual, Tariq Aziz, was named as Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister. Hussein described Aziz as one of the early Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) members. In Hussein's opinion, Aziz "did not gain anything" with this appointment. Hussein stated that he told the Iraqi leadership if he (Hussein) was to also have the title as Iraqi prime minister, he would need assistance from others. Thus, Aziz and Taha Yasin Ramadan were named as deputy prime ministers.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein explained that the duties of a personal secretary include arranging the schedule of the person for whom the person is working. A secretary must be precise in executing his duties. Hussein selected Mahmoud as his personal secretary because he was "suitable for the position." He added that this was his own choice and not a matter of historical significance. Hussein reiterated that Mahmoud had served in the Himaya and Murafiheen, and that both organizations were composed of Hussein's relatives. At the beginning of the Revolution, only one of his relatives served in an Iraqi government political position. At that time, Hussein's relatives had limited education and primarily served in the Iraqi army and other military services.

~~(S)~~ Hussein pointed out that members of his protective detail did not necessarily dictate the details of his movements. He claimed that at times, he taught them ways to improve their performance and be more successful. He recalled joking with them that he could perform their job better. He felt it was very important that detail members not to be "rough" when Hussein "mingled" with the people. In his opinion, the detail would have failed in its mission if it "isolated" him from the masses. It was also important that the detail be able to alter their duties and behavior to accommodate Hussein's nature. As further evidence of his teaching abilities, Hussein stated that if requested, he could provide advice regarding the writer's interviewing duties. When asked to expound on this statement, Hussein stated, "A doctor does not chase people asking them what is wrong. They come to him."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated the most important thing is to look at one's position, whether executing or planning, to determine how to perform duties. A person executing orders must be precise and quick. One who supervises must allow those under him to exercise initiative. The "margin for initiative" differs between civilian and military situations. Hussein stated, "The eyes in the field are different than those at headquarters." Often, the "field eyes" are more accurate in understanding a particular situation than headquarters components.

~~(S)~~ Regarding character traits he seeks in subordinates, Hussein stated, "A human being is not like merchandise." One may think an individual is suitable for a position only to later discover that he does not possess the

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desirable traits. According to Hussein, a particular situation may require the selection of a particular individual even though, under other circumstances, this individual may not be considered the best choice. This is particularly true in the context of selecting the right person for military operations.

Hussein explained that the selection or dismissal of individuals for particular military or governmental positions often involves consideration of the perception of one's family or tribe. Another factor to consider is the strength of the Iraqi psyche and sense of "individuality." Although a particular situation may necessitate the removal of an Iraqi from his position, a leader must consider how this individual's removal may be perceived. For example, relatives of an individual removed from office may question the individual's character. Some will ask "again and again" why the individual was dismissed. Others may ask, "Was he a coward?" These questions may even be asked when an individual decides to retire under normal circumstances. The families of such individuals may feel "tainted." Under some circumstances, such actions may cause families to hate the government. Hussein explained that in having to consider these feelings and attitudes, military and governmental leaders were often limited in making personnel changes, even if they were deemed necessary.

(S) When asked about the commonly reported uprisings which occurred in southern Iraq after the war in 1991, Hussein claimed that he had not heard of such uprisings. When it was pointed out that many interviews and reports had documented the uprisings, Hussein asked, "Have we not discussed this matter?" He stated, however, that within a day of the cease fire of 1991, "some elements" had initiated sabotage operations in the southern Iraq cities of Basra, Nasiriyah, and Amarah. Later, this activity spread to the northern cities of Suleimaniyah, Erbil, and Kirkuk. Hussein stated that the groups conducting these operations were "pushed by Iran," and that Iraq captured 68 Iranian intelligence officers who were later exchanged for Iraqi prisoners.

(S) At the time of the uprisings, most bridges in Iraq had already been destroyed. Electricity did not exist. Water service was sporadic, and food supplies were minimal. In the aftermath of the war, these factors contributed to general unrest in the country. Hussein stated the "elements" participating in

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the uprisings were a mixture of thieves, rebels, and "those from Iran." The latter group included individuals from Iranian government services, Iraqis of Iranian origin, and Iraqis who had "escaped" to Iran. Their nationalities were difficult to determine with any degree of certainty because many had intentionally destroyed their citizenship documents.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that after deciding to reassert government control of the country, the Iraqi leadership considered the southern area of Iraq to be a high priority. It was in this area where Iraqi forces encountered and fought primarily Iranians. After order was restored in southern Iraq, government forces focused on the northern region where Iraqi forces met little or no resistance. The fighting in northern and southern Iraq lasted approximately two months. Hussein stated, "God made us victorious." Thereafter, according to Hussein, Iran continued to insert groups of ten to fifteen people into Iraq to conduct operations against the government. However, these individuals were, for the most part, thwarted by members of the local population. Ultimately, following an agreement between Iran and Iraq, these hostile operations ceased.

~~(S)~~ Hussein characterized the uprisings in 1991 as insurgent activity conducted by "outlaws and thieves." He did not consider the insurgents to be revolutionaries. When asked what factors allowed these disturbances, Hussein answered that it was support from Iran, weakness of the Iraqi government after the war, and possibly assistance from coalition forces. He noted that all government institutions including the police and the military had been weakened as a result of the war. Gradually, however, the Iraqi military grew in strength, and they were eventually able to overcome these rebels. According to Hussein, the Iraqi military's "blade got longer and longer." He acknowledged, however, that the weakened state of the Iraqi military had been the main factor which provided the opportunity for this lawlessness in the first place.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believed the goal of the insurgent activity was to control Iraq. In his opinion, this tactic was utilized in 1991 after Iran had been unable to accomplish this goal through its previous war with Iraq. Iran had wanted to control all or at least a part of Iraq, particularly the southern portion. It was Hussein's belief that Iran also wanted to extend its power to eastern Saudi Arabia and into the entire Gulf region.

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~~(S)~~ The RCC gave the Iraqi provincial governors control of the military during the uprisings in order to protect the people and the state and to re-establish security and a "normal life." The people and the nation were threatened by widespread killings, theft, arson, and general destruction, all of which had to be brought under control. Hussein denied knowledge of the methods used by the governors and the military to reassert control. Hussein stated, "They were given the authority, and they carried it out." At the time, he did not ask for details of the operation, but he did request and receive status reports regarding the progress of operations.

~~(S)~~ Regarding limitations placed on the Iraqi military by the leadership during this time period, Hussein asked, "What do you mean by limits?" Hussein denied that the Geneva Convention applied to this situation, claiming it only applied to wars. Hussein claimed that with respect to internal conflict, the Geneva Convention applied only to situations when an occupying power is another country. He claimed that the Geneva Convention was applicable to attempted coups or internal unrest involving crimes such as burning and looting.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer pointed out to Hussein that international law does not permit the targeting of civilians even when the location of a military objective is populated by civilians and that certain laws of humanity always apply. When asked again what restrictions were placed on the Iraqi military during the 1991 uprisings, Hussein replied that an Iraqi, whether civilian or military, knows what is acceptable as humane behavior, and there is no need for someone to have to tell them how to behave.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, "I am responsible for what I decide." He added that he is not responsible for how an Iraqi acts. Hussein claimed that if an Iraqi wanted to use him (Hussein) as the justification for his actions, he would accept that assertion so long as it does not harm Hussein's reputation. In Hussein's opinion, a leader is responsible for the actions of a subordinate if he becomes aware of that subordinate's transgressions and confronts him about the wrongfulness of his actions. He stated that each individual is judged based on his own law and constitution.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 11, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-20-2009

Interview Session Number: 13  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [REDACTED]

b6  
b7C

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 11, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the previous discussions regarding Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Regarding information from the Kuwaiti government indicating that the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait caused \$180 billion in damages to the country, Hussein asked for the source of this information. When told the source was Kuwait, Hussein asked which neutral and legal entity questioned Kuwait regarding the basis of their conclusion. He opined that "no one" asked Kuwait for the details of their investigation of this matter. Hussein again questioned the existence of evidence supporting these Kuwaiti assertions.

~~(S)~~ Hussein reiterated information provided in a previous interview stating, "Kuwait is Iraqi." According to Hussein, Kuwait was "stolen" from Iraq by a British resolution. He added that if Kuwait had not been a country with oil, it would not have been "stolen." Hussein stated that the arrogance of the Kuwaiti rulers made them "stupid" and ignited the war. He further stated that he understands that the United States, located across the Atlantic Ocean, would want Iraq to be poor. However, he cannot understand how Kuwait would want to exist next to a "hungry country."

~~(S)~~ Hussein emphasized that he is not saying that Kuwait did not have the right to make these statements. He again questioned the identity of the neutral entity which examined this matter and whether it was discussed with Iraq. Hussein suggested

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that something similar to a court should have been formed to hear the details from both sides and to decide this matter. However, this did not happen.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that just prior to the latest war, American officials said all Iraqi debts would be forgiven including monies owed to Kuwait. In Hussein's opinion, this proved any amount reportedly owed to Kuwait was not a legal debt and was a "political" matter. He added that this policy was driven by the United States and not the United Nations (UN), Kuwait, or any other entity.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer told Hussein that Kuwait never asked for compensation for the damages suffered during the Iraqi invasion and occupation. Kuwait did, however, ask for the return of 605 prisoners of war (POWs). To date, these POWs have not been returned. Hussein stated these Kuwaitis were not "captives" and are missing as characterized by a UN resolution. He stated that many "stories and novels have been woven" around this issue, similar to the matter of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The Kuwaiti POW accusations have been proven to be false, however, similar to the WMD rumors. Hussein stated that individuals often become "missing" during a war. He provided as examples the one coalition individual still missing from the first Gulf War and the thousands of Iraqis and Iranians missing from the war between the two countries. As for the 605 Kuwaitis, Hussein stated that Kuwait knows their fate. Hussein denied knowledge that 605 Kuwaitis were captured in circumstances other than combat after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Aziz Saleh Al-Numan was Governor of Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation. As such, he reported directly to the Iraqi Minister of Interior, a position held by Ali Hasan Al-Majid at that time. Al-Numan's duties as Governor were set forth in Iraqi provincial laws. Hussein does not remember whether Al-Numan was appointed by him or by decree of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). In Iraq, the Constitution sets forth the authority of the RCC and the President who is also the Chairman of the RCC. Some governmental appointments such as those given to high-ranking officers in the military, judges, and general directors are based on a "republican" directive. Hussein explained that the Iraqi system does not prevent the President from submitting a name for consideration of appointment and requesting subsequent feedback

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from the RCC. Decisions in Iraq are signed by the President. It is his prerogative to consult or not to consult anyone. Hussein stated "his style" was to always consult with others when the time came to make a decision. Governors were assigned based on a "republican" or Presidential directive. Hussein does not remember if he discussed the appointment of Al-Numan with the RCC.

~~(S)~~ When questioned regarding Iraq's usage of Kuwaitis, Japanese, and westerners as human shields during the first Gulf War including the positioning of them at key sites such as communications centers and military positions, Hussein denied that such individuals were taken to Iraqi military positions. He added that the Iraqi government did not, however, prevent individuals from volunteering as human shields to protect facilities such as communications centers. When questioned whether such volunteers existed in 1991, Hussein replied, "I do not remember."

~~(S)~~ The translator read to Hussein an Iraqi government communication from Qusay Hussein concerning the usage of Kuwaiti prisoners as human shields. Hussein stated that he has no information about this letter. When noted to Hussein that the document was recovered by American forces from an Iraqi government building and is deemed legitimate, Hussein stated, "I answered." He asked whether the captives discussed in this communication were ever questioned about being held in Iraqi captivity or being used as human shields. Hussein stated that Iraq released all the Kuwaiti captives. Upon being told the document was dated March 14, 2003, Hussein stated, "It is a forgery. It is impossible." He suggested that the communication should be examined closely to determine authenticity and that he had thought it was dated 1991. Hussein stated that if the date of the document is 2003, it is a forgery. He added that Iraq did not have captives at that time. Hussein stated that Qusay was not the type of person to "make up things." He reiterated that experts in the United States and in Iraq should scrutinize this document for authenticity.

~~(S)~~ Regarding chemical weapons and why Iraq did not use them in the first Gulf War, Hussein replied that he had been asked this question previously and had answered. When noted to him that the interviewer had not previously asked this question, Hussein replied that he believed it was strange that the

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interviewer or anyone else would ask this question, not just at this point but at any time. He stated that it is not Iraqi policy to use chemical weapons against coalition forces. Hussein commented that this was a discussion of history, not unrealistic hypotheticals. He asked how Iraq would have been described if it had used chemical weapons. Hussein replied to his own question, "We would have been called stupid." According to Hussein, chemical weapons, and their use, were never discussed by Iraqi officials before or during the 1991 war.

~~(S)~~ As stated during a previous interview, Hussein acknowledged a meeting in January, 1991 just before the war between US Secretary of State James Baker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz. Hussein remembers a statement by Baker to "take Iraq back to the pre-industrial age." He stated that Iraq would not be intimidated by threats, however, especially when coming from someone in "a strong position." Hussein denied knowledge that part of this discussion concerned the position of the United States regarding Iraq's possible use of chemical weapons should hostilities occur. According to Hussein, "We decided the right thing to do." He stated that the use of chemical weapons did not "cross our mind."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that Sultan Hashem, Iraqi Minister of Defense, and Saleh, Second Corps Commander, represented Iraq at the cease fire talks during the first Gulf War. Their positions and viewpoints were the same as those of the Iraqi leadership, to secure a cease fire and to start the withdrawal of foreign forces from Iraq. Hussein stated Iraq had no goal of continuing the war and desired a cease fire.

~~(S)~~ When questioned about other items discussed by Iraq at the 1991 cease fire talks, Hussein stated that he does not remember any additional Iraqi requests other than the withdrawal of foreign forces from their territory. In Hussein's opinion, the fighting would have continued without this withdrawal. Hussein denied knowledge that Iraq asked for, and received, permission to continue flying helicopters. He further denied knowledge of the purpose of such an Iraqi request.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 5, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-20-2009

Interview Session Number: 12  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: LS [REDACTED]

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b7C

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 5, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the previous discussions regarding Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz met with US Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva, Switzerland in January, 1991. From the perspective of the Iraqi leadership, the goal of this meeting was to exploit any chance for peace regarding the situation with Kuwait. When the opportunity was made available to discuss this matter with an American representative, Iraq decided to pursue this avenue. The Iraqi leadership believed that any results from this meeting would "carry weight" in the international community.

~~(S)~~ According to Hussein, Baker provided no solutions for the Kuwaiti situation. Instead, Baker dictated to Aziz certain steps that the United States wanted Iraq to accomplish first. Baker added, "Otherwise, we'll take you back to the pre-industrial age." Aziz told Baker that the accomplishment of these steps would not be possible.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that the Kuwaiti issue needed to have been placed inside the framework of international law. This matter should not have been reduced to one in which the strong side (United States) dictated to the weak side (Iraq) the terms of the agreement. Iraq sought a format which did not portray it as defeated, but rather one showing respect for the Iraqi military and its people.

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(S) Hussein stated, "We had a desire for peace." In a document dated August 12, 1990, Iraq expressed this desire through its first proposal. As stated in a previous interview, this proposal was not accepted by any member of the international community. Iraq wanted a guarantee of no further aggression directed against them and an end to the embargo against Iraq.

(S) Without existing in the framework of international law, Hussein reiterated that Iraq would have appeared as defeated with respect to the Iraq-Kuwait issue. Hussein considered the referenced Iraqi proposal for a peaceful solution regarding Kuwait as legitimate. As with any proposal, not all parts will be accepted. The Iraqi solution was never discussed, however. Hussein questioned whether the issue regarding Kuwait was more important than the Palestinian issue. He opined that Kuwait was deemed more important by the United States and the international community because Iraq was the opposing entity and because of the existence of oil in Kuwait. As stated in a previous interview, Hussein implied that Kuwait had "been taken" from Iraq. He added that the world did not "assemble and stop" when Yemen was reunited after many years of separation.

(S) Continuing the discussion of the Iraqi proposal of August 12, 1990, Hussein questioned why it was considered unusual for Iraq to have asked that United Nations (UN) resolutions be enforced with respect to lands previously seized by Israel and Syria. If these resolutions had been enforced, Iraqis would have believed that international law was being applied fairly to Iraq in 1991. Hussein stated that no one notified Iraq that certain paragraphs or sections of the Iraqi proposal needed to be changed or deleted. He stated that Iraq had seriously explored several avenues to achieve peace.

(S) Asked whether Iraqi leaders were surprised at the number of Iraqi prisoners of war (POWs), estimated at 86,743, captured by coalition forces during the 1991 war, Hussein replied, "No. This is war." According to Hussein, the Iraqi POWs were not captured in the classic sense. There were many factors leading to their capture including their loss of communications and transportation, a lack of food and a sense of disorientation. Because of these factors, many Iraqi soldiers traveled to Saudi Arabia for safe haven where they were picked up by coalition forces. In contrast, Hussein stated that the effect

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of the attacks against Iraq in 2003 was much greater than that in 1991. Despite this, fewer Iraqi POWs were captured in 2003 and he attributed this to different factors which existed in 1991.

(S) Hussein denied that the Iraqi leadership was disappointed with the large number of Iraqi POWs in 1991. Hussein stated, "Nothing would shake our determination." He advised that war has fortunes and misfortunes and that this is God's will. Hussein denied that the large number of Iraqis captured by coalition forces influenced Iraq's ability to continue fighting. He claimed that the number of POWs indicates neither the stage nor the outcome of a war. He stated that Iraq had won the war against Iran despite Iran's capture of more POWs. In Hussein's opinion, the capture of POWs in any amount does not necessarily affect one's will to fight, nor does it necessarily force certain military decisions. Hussein acknowledged that Iraqi POWs were released by coalition forces in 1991 and allowed to return home after the cease fire agreement was signed.

(S) Hussein was questioned about the 45 coalition POWs and the purpose of the apparent compulsory appearance of two British pilot POWs on Iraqi television. The interviewer noted that the pilots appeared to have been physically abused and that the featuring of them on television was a violation of the Geneva Convention. Hussein stated that the POWs, especially the pilots, would likely have provided different details about their capture. Some would say they were captured by farmers or villagers while others would say by a "group of people." These Iraqis might have celebrated the capture of the coalition combatants by hitting and pushing them around. The Iraqi military was not always in control or aware of circumstances regarding captured individuals because communications between military units had been knocked out by coalition forces.

(S) Regarding coalition POWs captured in 1991, Hussein denied knowledge of any abuse of them by those serving in the Iraqi military or the Iraqi government. However, he clarified this statement by saying that he did not deny that others may have "behaved in a bad manner" and that he was speaking only about his personal knowledge of the matter. Hussein added that he would provide such information if he were aware of it. He stated that he subscribes to a document much older than the Geneva Convention, the Koran. The Koran and Arab tradition believe that it is "noble" to treat a prisoner well. Hussein

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Baghdad Operations Center

believes that the principles enunciated in the Geneva Convention should be respected by the entire world regardless of one's circumstances or nationality.

~~(S)~~ Regarding reports that all coalition POWs were tortured while in Iraqi custody, Hussein neither confirmed nor denied these reports. Instead, he stated this information is "on the conscience" of those who reported it and those who conducted the investigation. Hussein explained that leaders command by "communication instruments." Lower level commanders lead by "vision or voice." Without proper communication instruments, each entity behaves according to "how it sees things." Hussein reiterated that Iraqi communications systems were inoperative during the 1991 war. Accordingly, he speculated that some reported acts of physical abuse, such as the burning of a POW's hair, might have been the acts of a "simpleton." When it was pointed out that the abuse of coalition forces could reasonably lead one to believe this was a widespread practice conducted by the entire Iraqi military, Hussein replied, "I answered."

~~(S)~~ Hussein maintained that he does not question the accounts of abuse of coalition POWs and that he has no personal information to either confirm or deny these allegations. However, from a practical perspective, he does not doubt that the Iraqi people, after being attacked by coalition pilots, might have abused pilots especially if they had participated in their capture.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
March 3, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-20-2009

Interview Session Number: 11  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [redacted]  
Arabic/English Translation: [redacted]

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b7C

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed March 3, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the previous discussions regarding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that he devised the plan for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Because the geography of Kuwait is essentially open land, neither specific tactical planning nor special assets was needed to effect the operation. Any person with basic military knowledge could have put together an effective invasion plan.

~~(S)~~ The invasion of Kuwait was accomplished within two and a half hours, equivalent to that previously estimated. Hussein stated it should have taken no more than one hour. He believes it should have occurred more quickly than originally estimated due to support for the invasion from the Kuwaiti people. Hussein reiterated a previous statement to the interviewers that Iraq was asked by the Kuwaiti people to invade their country in order to remove the Kuwaiti leadership. When asked to clarify how the Kuwaiti citizens communicated their desires to the Iraqi government prior to the invasion, Hussein stated some, not all, Kuwaitis felt this way. He added, "We felt they were asking."

~~(S)~~ Regarding the assault on the coastal city of Khafji and who designed this attack, Hussein stated, "Me." He added that he would not shift the blame to his friends. Hussein stated that military planning was easy after eight years of war with Iran from 1980 to 1988. Any military operation requires

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Baghdad Operations Center

knowledge of the geography of the area and knowledge of the weapons and the capabilities of the enemy as well as one's own capabilities. Other important factors include the training, logistical support, and morale of the troops. With such knowledge, the military operation against Khafji was simple to plan. The land was open, similar to southern Iraq, and provided no "complications." The only concern was enemy air power capability.

(S) When questioned whether the purpose of the assault on Khafji was to force the coalition forces into a ground war, Hussein replied that military experts knew that any ground attack against the Iraqi Army was a difficult task. He opined that two million troops would have been needed to fight the Iraqi ground forces. Aircraft, however, could be used to strike Iraqi forces and thereafter return to base. The preliminary information available to Iraq indicated that coalition ground forces were in the vicinity of Khafji. For this reason, Iraqi forces decided to attack the location and to "force a fight." Hussein stated that it seemed that coalition forces withdrew upon attack by Iraqi forces. Thereafter, Iraqi ground forces remained in the area. As time passed, Iraq lost soldiers, ammunition, and equipment. Many Iraqi soldiers died as the result of repeated coalition air assaults without ever seeing the enemy approaching over land.

(S) Hussein denied that Iraqi forces were defeated at Khafji, forcing them to withdraw. Hussein stated Iraq did not intend to occupy the city. Iraqi ground forces went to the location to fight with coalition ground forces. Upon encountering little to no ground resistance, Iraqi forces withdrew on the second day, of their own choosing. Hussein noted that it seemed coalition forces were not aware of the Iraqi withdrawal for a few days. Hussein acknowledged that coalition forces had air supremacy.

(S) Regarding whether one of the Iraqi objectives of the assault on Khafji was to capture American prisoners of war (POWs), Hussein stated one of the principles of war is to kill or capture the enemy. After fourteen days of coalition bombardment of Iraqi forces, Iraq wanted to force casualties upon coalition forces. However, Iraq preferred to capture coalition personnel. In Hussein's opinion, this would have had a "lot of effect" on the enemy. Hussein acknowledged that the assault on Khafji may not have been effective and may have shown coalition forces

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Iraq's strengths. This may have led to prolonged coalition air strikes and a delay in the ground war.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes Iraqi forces should have conducted their ground assault even earlier. The operation was delayed an additional week, creating an opportunity for the coalition to conduct additional air strikes which weakened the Iraqi ground forces. Hussein denied that there was a plan to capture American POWs as a method of trying to prevent continued coalition air attacks.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that he, and no one else in the Iraqi government or leadership, gave the orders to fire SCUD missiles at Israel. He stated, "Everything that happened to us was because of Israel." Hussein added that all the "bad things" for Arabs came as the result of Israeli actions. He opined that Israel "pushes" US politicians and "fills them with hatred." Israel first attacked Iraq in 1981 destroying the country's only nuclear reactor. As far as Iraq was concerned, the war with Israel was "still on." During the conflict in 1991, Hussein reasoned that the United States would stop the war if Israel was "hurt." He also wanted to punish the country that he considered as the source of all the problems. Hussein denied that one of his reasons for striking Israel with SCUD missiles was to cause Israeli retaliation, a collapse of the coalition, and withdrawal of Arab support for the coalition. According to Hussein, the Arab countries which supported the coalition had been "shamed." Thus, any withdrawal of their support against Iraq was inconsequential.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated there were two reasons for the war in 1991, oil and Israel. He added that Kuwait would not have considered doing anything against Iraq unless "pushed" by another country (the United States). When the interviewer pointed out to Hussein that historians believe Iraq acted first, Hussein replied that this was the result (of Kuwait's actions) and not the reason (for the war).

~~(S)~~ Hussein denied that Iraqi forces withdrew from Kuwait following their defeat. He insisted Iraqi forces withdrew as the result of an official proclamation. This cease fire, including the Iraqi withdrawal, was negotiated by the Russians and accepted by Iraq. Coalition air attacks against Iraqi ground forces occurred while troops were retreating under official

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orders from the Iraqi leadership. Hussein denied that Iraqi forces would have been eliminated if they had not withdrawn.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated an Iraqi plan of withdrawal existed as early as August 12, 1990. However, Iraq found no government in the international community nor in the Arab world which would agree to negotiate the terms of this plan. The President of France expressed support for the plan, but subsequently withdrew this support after receiving pressure from the United States. Thereafter, Iraqi accepted the previously discussed Russian initiative. Hussein denied that the plan was accepted because of huge Iraqi military losses.

~~(S)~~ The interview then turned to a discussion of a letter dated February 19, 1991 from Hussein Kamil, in the name of Iraqi President Hussein, to Ali Hasan Al-Majid. The letter stated, in part, that the Iraqi military should remove any and all property from Kuwait which will aid in the rebuilding of Iraq. Hussein stated the normal method of conveying directions from the President would be via letters from the Presidential Diwan. Kamil was not a secretary, but was simply one of the Iraqi Ministers. Kamil was "known for his way of doing things." Upon being read the letter by the translator, Hussein asked whether the document referred to items used by the Iraqi military in Kuwait or to things from Kuwait itself. He added that he never instructed the Iraqi military to remove items, either their own equipment or Kuwaiti items. Hussein opined that the letter may refer to equipment in Kuwait that was utilized by the various Iraqi Ministers for critical services such as electricity, water, transportation, and telephone service. He stated the letter was dated nine days before the cease fire. Hussein denied that the letter referred to Kuwaiti property. He stated it was simply a letter from one minister subordinate to another minister, asking for the return of materials taken to Kuwait by Iraqi forces. Hussein stated that he did not issue the letter. He asked what items or materials were taken from Kuwait after this letter was published.

~~(S)~~ When questioned whether members of the Iraqi leadership were allowed to issue letters in the name of the President without his knowledge, Hussein stated, "There are bad elements everywhere. He (Hussein Kamil) is dead now." Hussein denied knowledge of whether other members of the Iraqi leadership acted on authority of the President without actually having power

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delegated to them by Hussein. Hussein acknowledged that the referenced letter was not conveyed in an official manner. He reiterated that the official method of issuance of such a letter, upon orders from Hussein, would have been to send a communication from the Presidential Diwan to Ali Hasan Al-Majid, in this case. This letter would have specifically enumerated the powers to be delegated to a particular individual, in this case, Hussein Kamil.

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DECLASSIFY ON: 06-01-2034

Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 27, 2004

Interview Session Number: 10  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro

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SSA [REDACTED]

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Arabic/English Translation: [REDACTED]

~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed February 27, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the previous discussion regarding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. In particular, today's conversation would begin with a discussion of United Nations Resolution (UNR) 662 which did not recognize Iraq's annexation of Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the Iraqi government's reaction to UNR 662, Hussein stated, "Nothing happened." According to Hussein, when the United States decided to attack Iraq, this action made the annexation of Kuwait the only solution. At that point, there was no political solution. Hussein reiterated comments from a previous interview wherein he stated Iraqi soldiers would not have fought appropriately or "have taken care of Kuwait" were it not annexed and made part of Iraq. He again emphasized that the actions of the United States "forced our hand."

~~(S)~~ When noted to Hussein that UNR 662 was issued in August, 1990, long before any US or coalition forces military action, Hussein stated that military forces opposing Iraq were already in Saudi Arabia at that time. This, coupled with various decisions and announcements made by the United States, indicated a prelude to a US attack against Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Hussein noted that the UN seemed only to "watch" the Iran-Iraq War for eight years, without concern. Only near the end of the conflict, when Iraq had overcome Iranian forces, did the UN propose and Iran accept a cease fire agreement. In

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Hussein's opinion, the UN "was not honorable" during the Iran-Iraq War. During the war between the two countries, some of the major countries wanted to see "the power drained" from Iran and Iraq. He added that the UN "interferes with everybody." Hussein believes that Iraq's membership in the UN should have precluded its invasion in 1991 and its present occupation.

~~(S)~~ Hussein questioned whether legitimate efforts were made by the UN or individual countries to prevent the conflict with Kuwait or to set the terms of withdrawal after invasion. He denied there was any "initiative" from other countries. Hussein stated the Soviet Union proposed one plan for withdrawal which Iraq accepted. However, the UN did not accept this proposal. Egypt, in Hussein's opinion, "did nothing."

~~(S)~~ The initiative concerning any plan for withdrawal from Kuwait came from Iraq. On August 12, 1990, Iraq proposed a solution for "everybody in the area." This plan included enforcement of previous UN decisions regarding lands occupied by Israel. Hussein questioned why the UN did not attack Israel for failing to observe resolutions. Hussein stated that the "mistakes" of Israel are not considered by the UN. Regarding Iraqi mistakes, however, the UN is always concerned.

~~(S)~~ During Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, Hussein denied knowledge of the commission of atrocities by the Iraqi military. These atrocities include the punishment, including executions, of Kuwaiti individuals who prayed on their roofs, who failed to hang pictures of Hussein, who displayed pictures of the previous Kuwaiti royal family, or who wrote anti-Iraqi graffiti. Hussein stated, "This is the first time I have ever heard this." He added, of the mentioned punishable offenses, he particularly does not believe two of them were designated as crimes. First, the Iraqi government did not force Iraqis to display pictures of Hussein, therefore, the government would not have forced Kuwaitis to do this. In Iraq, citizens voluntarily chose to display Hussein's picture in their homes. Second, neither Iraqis, nor Kuwaitis are prohibited from praying anywhere, including their roofs. According to Hussein, the other reportedly punishable offenses are on the "conscience of whoever said this" and that person is "a liar."

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged two, possibly three, incidents where Iraqi soldiers were executed in Kuwait. In one incident,

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an Iraqi soldier was executed for committing burglary during the occupation of Kuwait. In another incident, an Iraqi Lieutenant Colonel was executed, and his body hung on public display for 48 hours, for assaulting a female in Kuwait. This individual's body was left in public for all Iraqi officers and soldiers to see in order to emphasize the rules. A third incident resulting in an execution may have occurred, but Hussein does not remember the details.

~~(S)~~ Hussein denied knowledge of the number of Kuwaitis killed, military or civilian, during combat operations or during the alleged atrocities previously mentioned. Hussein stated, "It was war time." He added that Iraq is a Third World country which signed the Geneva Convention. The United States is an advanced country which supposedly would not make the same mistakes as a Third World country. Hussein questioned the statistics regarding the numbers of Iraqi civilians killed, abuses committed against Iraqis, or Iraqi prisoners tortured by United States forces.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the igniting of oil wells in Kuwait by withdrawing Iraqi forces and the subsequent environmental disaster deemed one of the worst in history, Hussein asked, "More than Chernobyl?" He requested to know the number of people who died in Kuwait because of the smoke created by the fires. Hussein denied that Iraqi forces ignited the oil wells. He acknowledged that Iraqi forces burned "oil in trenches" as they were retreating. The resulting smoke blocked target acquisition by coalition aircraft and prevented additional troops from dying. Hussein acknowledged that he was told that "a few" oil wells were ignited. He stated that even if he were shown pictures or videos of these events, he would not believe Iraqi forces committed them. He maintained that these forms of media are easy to manipulate and fabricate. Hussein stated his belief that it would not be a crime for the Iraqi military to burn oil in order to prevent planes from attacking them. If such an event took place, this would have been an act of a desperate person who had no weapons remaining with which to defend himself. When questioned if he was offered proof to show that the 150 oil well fires in Kuwait were an act of sabotage by the Iraqi military and not an act of defense, Hussein stated he would provide a response at that time.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the previously discussed execution of Iraqi soldiers in Kuwait, Hussein stated that the information

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about these matters may have been provided to him verbally or in writing. In all likelihood, a trial occurred prior to the executions. Hussein opined that without this severe and immediate action, more crimes, possibly hundreds, might have occurred in Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that Ali Hasan Al-Majid was a member of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) during the occupation of Kuwait. Al-Majid's role during the occupation was to "arrange and organize everything" in Kuwait. The decision granting Al-Majid this authority was made at an official meeting of the RCC. Al-Majid was the senior Iraqi official in Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Regarding other Iraqi officials assigned duties in Kuwait, Hussein stated there were many of them ranging from traffic policemen to high government officials. Hussein stated he has no additional information regarding others with responsibilities in Kuwait and provided no additional names of such Iraqi officials. Hussein added that the Iraqi government attempted to provide all services, particularly the critical ones, such as electricity, to Kuwaiti citizens.

~~(S)~~ When questioned regarding the ongoing Kuwaiti resistance during the Iraqi occupation and efforts by the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS) to stop it, Hussein stated, "I do not have an answer with these details." When again asked, Hussein replied that he had given his answer and "I am not a person who gives away his friends."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked, as the ex-President of Iraq, about Iraqi policy regarding treatment of POWs. Hussein replied, "I am not the ex-President of Iraq. I am still the President of Iraq." He added that he still respects the will of the people (their support of him as President). He continued saying that Iraq respects the Geneva Convention and that they had asked other countries to do the same. Hussein commented that in his speeches, he asked each soldier to respect the Geneva Convention and to remember and abide by the soldier's "religious principles."

~~(S)~~ Hussein denied giving orders to mistreat, abuse, or torture US POWs. According to Hussein, such a proclamation would have affected his reputation in front of the people and was, therefore, unacceptable. Others may state that Hussein issued

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such orders so that they might absolve themselves of responsibility. If these individuals say such things, Hussein will accept responsibility as commander and admit these accusations as long as such an admission will not dishonor him. He reiterated he would not have given such orders because of what religion teaches. Hussein provided a saying, "There is a well of water in Paradise. If one feeds an orphan or a prisoner, he will drink from the well." Hussein stated the proof of his beliefs is in his speeches. He made this assertion despite previously stating actions, not words, are what matters. Hussein remarked that his speeches as President are important.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the credible information that Iraq removed the Kuwaiti leadership from their country, reportedly with the agreement of the Kuwaiti citizens, only to have the Kuwaiti people welcome them back, Hussein opined that leaders (Kuwaitis) who accept foreign occupation (the United States) of their own country can be forcibly expelled. According to Hussein, the Kuwaiti leaders were not "from the people." On the contrary, they were originally brought in by the British. Hussein stated that he knew how the citizens of Kuwait felt before the invasion and after occupation by Iraqi forces. If Kuwaiti citizens accepted the former leadership after Iraqi occupation, Hussein stated that he respected their decision.

~~(S)~~ Hussein reiterated a belief provided in a previous interview that whoever "conspires against a brother" must be kicked out (Kuwait, in this case). Regarding the tradition or understanding that Arab nations should not take up arms against one another, Hussein stated that he concurred with this belief and that he affirmed so publicly in a speech long before the invasion of Kuwait. Other Arab nations, however, including Kuwait, refused to abide by this principle. Saudi Arabia confiscated land from Yemen. Syria continues to occupy territory in Lebanon. Egypt has confiscated land from Sudan and has acted aggressively towards Libya.

~~(S)~~ Returning to the subject of American POWs, Hussein again denied knowledge of torture or abuse as documented through medical examinations upon their repatriation. Hussein questioned whether such findings were made by Americans or by an independent investigative body. Hussein restated that any bad treatment is not acceptable whether against an Iraqi citizen or against the citizen of another country. He denied that information regarding

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abuse and torture of US POWs was presented to the Iraqi leadership.

(S) In the context of the discussion regarding allegations of mistreatment of US POWs by Iraq, the interviewer stated, "Both the US Government, the UN, and the Red Cross had made these allegations known to the Iraqi Government. These probably would not go to the attention of the President, but they were not addressed by anyone within the Iraqi leadership." Hussein replied, "What I was made aware of was that there was an American prisoner, not a prisoner, excuse me, but an American person. I think an officer. It was said his plane was hit above the western desert and he parachuted and the Americans were looking for him. They showed me the paperwork and I told them to facilitate the mission and to tell them they are welcome. Let them keep the information so they will not say that we reviewed it. Let them keep the information with them. As for the people that are searching, let them come here and tell us where is that pilot, I mean they do the searching."

(S) Hussein does not remember the pilot's name, including whether it was Speicher. He told Iraqi officials to allow the Americans to search for this individual. Hussein stated Iraqi officials "helped" in the search for information regarding the missing pilot's whereabouts.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 24, 2004

Interview Session Number: 9  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
Arabic/English Translation: SSA [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 24, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the discussion of the history of Iraq. In particular, today's conversation would cover events leading up to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that after the war with Iran from 1980-88, Iraq was trying to rebuild. Hussein likened the situation with Kuwait as similar to when two individuals fight, the fight ends, and the two parties go their separate ways. Thereafter, one of the previous disputing parties is bothered by someone else who also wants to fight. Then, there is no choice but to fight again.

~~(S)~~ According to Hussein, Khomeini and Iran would have occupied all of the Arab world if it had not been for Iraq. As such, Iraq expected the Arab world to support them during and after the war. However, Iraq saw the opposite regarding support, especially from Kuwait. At the end of the war as Iraq began the rebuilding process, the price of oil was approximately \$7 per barrel. In Hussein's opinion, Iraq could not possibly rebuild its infrastructure and economy with oil prices at this level. Kuwait was especially at fault regarding these low oil prices.

~~(S)~~ In an effort to solve the situation and stimulate economic recovery, Iraq sent Dr. Hammadi, Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Kuwait. Hammadi, and the Iraqi leadership's conclusion after the meeting was that the oil price situation was not just the responsibility/work of the Kuwaitis. Iraq believed

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some other entity, some larger power was behind this "conspiracy."

~~(S)~~ Iraq also sent government officials to Saudi Arabia to convince the Saudis to pressure Kuwait. In addition, the Saudi Minister of Oil came to Iraq and held talks about oil prices, the Iraqi economy, and the actions of Kuwait. Hussein claimed that a Kuwaiti official said, "We'll make the economy in Iraq so bad, one would be able to sleep with an Iraqi woman for ten dinars." Hussein told the Saudis that if Kuwait did not stop interfering in Iraqi affairs, he would make the Kuwaiti dinar worth ten fils.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated that when Kuwait was faced with the facts regarding "stealing" Iraqi oil using the practice of slant drilling, they admitted to having taken "only two and a half billion barrels." They stated this fact as if it was not significant.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the problems with Kuwait, Iraq sent delegates to other Gulf countries which Hussein does not remember. These delegates explained the Kuwaiti situation and the Iraqi situation. The other countries promised to correct oil prices at the next meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

~~(S)~~ At the next OPEC meeting, a decision was made to fix the oil price at \$16-17 per barrel, as remembered by Hussein. Kuwait concurred with this decision. Thereafter, the Kuwaiti Minister of Oil or Minister of Foreign Affairs stated Kuwait would not abide by the OPEC decision.

~~(S)~~ <sup>(S)</sup> Regarding loan debts owed to Gulf countries as a result of support received during the Iran-Iraq War, Hussein stated these were not loans and were supposed to be free aid from these countries. The countries had originally used the word "loan" as a formality only to disguise the purpose of the funds from Iran. When Iraq was informed the money was actually from loans, Iraq held discussions with these countries, including Kuwait, in order to resolve these debts. Because the money had been "registered as loans" to Iraq, Iraq could not secure loans from other countries in order to rebuild.

(S) Hussein stated that twice he discussed a change in oil prices to \$25 per barrel. Once, when the price per barrel

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reached \$50, Hussein dictated a letter to Tariq Aziz, which was sent to the Thoura Newspaper. In the letter, he told the oil-producing countries that they should not take advantage of the industrialized nations. Hussein asked them to reduce the price per barrel to \$25. He commented that this was strange at the time as Iraq had oil and could use the money. When the price dropped to \$7 per barrel in 1989-90, Hussein called for an increase to \$24-25 per barrel. In Hussein's opinion, this price would not burden the consumer or hurt the producer.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the kind of message Kuwait's action or lack of action sent to Iraq, Hussein stated "this confirmed our information" that there was an "conspiracy" against Iraq, the Iraqi leadership, and Iraq's economy. In Hussein's opinion, the visit of US General Schwarzkopf to Kuwait also provided further confirmation. His visit included "sand planning" or wartime preparations for the invasion of Iraq confirming what Hussein and the leadership already believed. Previous to this event, Kuwait's relationship with the United States and Great Britain was well known. When noted to Hussein that the US military visits many countries throughout the world conducting exercises which are not indicators of a "conspiracy", Hussein asked, "In what other country did Schwarzkopf do 'sand planning' like Kuwait?" Hussein further questioned which other countries Schwarzkopf conducted negotiations with in order to enter for defensive purposes. Hussein acknowledged that he understands the existence and nature of exercises conducted by the United States in Egypt and Jordan. However, when exercises or planning cast Iraq as the enemy and include ways to defend Kuwait or attack Iraq, this is a different situation than the other exercises.

~~(S)~~ Hussein discussed the perception in the West regarding Iraq in the months leading up to the war in Kuwait. After Iraq's defeat of Iran, the media discussed Iraq as a military threat to the region. Iraq, however, was not "within Soviet circles" and was attempting to rebuild its economy. Iraq was also starting to build its relations with United States.

~~(S)~~ Soon, the United States made Iraq its enemy through three means or for three reasons. First, the "Zionist" power and influence in the United States dictates foreign policy. Any country viewed as a threat to Israel, such as Iraq, becomes a target of the "conspiracy." Hussein offered proof of this position stating Israel issued an official statement saying that

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any peace agreement with Arab countries must include Iraq. Hussein claims Israel is not hoping for peace, only that other countries abide by their wishes. Israel used its influence over the West against Nasser in Egypt similar to its position vis-a-vis Iraq. This "Zionist" influence extends throughout the United States to include elections. Secondly, there were formerly two superpowers in the world, the United States and the Soviet Union. According to Hussein, the world's existence then was "better than now" as it was easier for two powers to agree rather than attempt to get many to agree. Each of the two superpowers attempted to get other countries to side with them, forging a balance of power in the world. With the collapse of this balance, however, the United States was left alone as the sole superpower. The United States is now viewed as attempting to dictate its will to the rest of the world including Iraq. When countries do not agree with United States, such as Iraq, they become enemies. The third reason the United States made Iraq its enemy is for economic purposes. Certain entities within the United States, including weapons manufacturers and elements in the military, favor war due to the financial profit which can be reaped. This is true for companies selling everything from carpets to tanks in support of a war. Hussein added that America discovered the war in Afghanistan was not enough to sustain the profit making of the military-industrial complex of America. Thus, the war began with Iraq. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, all of these internal and external reasons combined to compel the United States to make Iraq its enemy.

~~(S)~~ Prior to the invasion of Kuwait, Hussein stated there was a meeting of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) in which a discussion of the matter took place. The Iraqi leadership of the RCC had hoped the Saudis would "interfere" and have a solution. The Deputy Chairman of the RCC had traveled to Saudi Arabia to solicit their assistance but returned without success. Thereafter, the matter could only be discussed and decided upon in favor of military action. Hussein acknowledged the possibility that one or more RCC members opposed or voted against the invasion, but he does not specifically remember any such opposition. He does not remember if a majority or all of the RCC members agreed on military action. Hussein stated, "I was against attacking if a solution could be found." The last attempt at reaching a solution occurred during the previously referenced visit to Saudi Arabia in which the Deputy Chairman of the RCC met with the brother of Kuwaiti leader Sheikh Sabah.

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~~(S)~~ The final decision to invade Kuwait was made in order to "defend by attacking." Hussein further justified the invasion based upon historical facts. He stated history dictates that Kuwait is a part of Iraq.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated the objective of the invasion was "the one announced." That is, Kuwaitis were to rule themselves and would decide what kind of relations they would have with Iraq. As for the Kuwaiti leaders, Hussein stated they were "conspirators" against Iraq, Kuwait, and all Arab countries. These leaders kept conspiring even after they left Kuwait upon invasion by Iraq. They were controlled by the United States.

~~(S)~~ Because of the country's "conspiracy" with the United States, Kuwait did not expect the "blow to them." Hussein stated Kuwait deserved "ten blows." Kuwait was not as strong militarily as Iran. Kuwait's lack of defensive positions is not indicative of the absence of plans with the United States. The plans discussed during the previously referenced "sand planning" may have been offensive in nature, not defensive. The reasons for Iraq's invasion existed, with or without the presence of American forces. As they did in the most recent war, the United States "created" the reasons to fight Iraq in Kuwait in 1991. Hussein denied creating this "conspiracy" as a justification for the invasion of Kuwait. He claimed documents discovered by Iraq in Kuwait prove the existence of the Kuwaiti "conspiracy" with the United States.

~~(S)~~ Hussein remarked, "We can discuss this for days." The United States and twenty-eight other countries took seven months to mobilize forces for the war in 1991. This mobilization occurred because of the power of Iraq and perceived military threat it posed. This threat motivated US politicians to support action against Iraq. In addition, the financial interests of companies that could profit from a war also motivated support for action against Iraq. The preemptive strike by Iraq into Kuwait was conducted so that defensive lines could not be completed. Hussein reiterated the lack of American forces in Kuwait does not mean there was not a "conspiracy."

~~(S)~~ Hussein restated that the goal of the invasion of Kuwait was to allow Kuwaitis the right to "decide the way they wanted to deal with Iraq." Hussein denied that the declaration of Kuwait as the 19th Province of Iraq contradicts his previous

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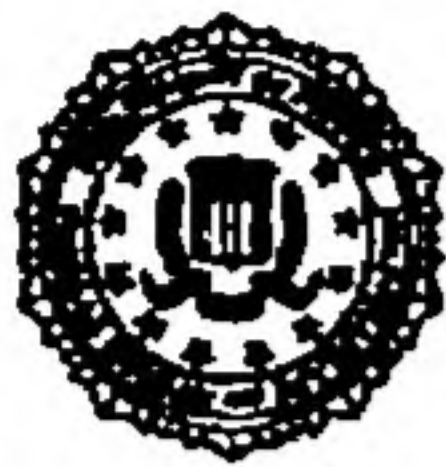
statement. According to Hussein, a Kuwaiti government was established after the invasion and included a prime minister and various other ministers. Hussein denied that Iraqi RCC member Ali Hasan Al-Majid was appointed Governor of Kuwait. He added that the Kuwaiti cabinet decided to "join the Iraqis." When questioned whether the Kuwaitis were given a choice, Hussein asked whether Iraqis were given the choice to voice their opinion regarding the recent war against Iraq. He continued that Iraq's acts with respect to Kuwait were more logical than the United States position on Iraq in the most recent war. Hussein stated the designation of Kuwait as the 19th Province was "deserved and logical." In 1961 or 1962, then Iraqi President Qassem wanted to make Kuwait a district of Iraq.

(S) Hussein emphasized that he has already explained why no other actions were taken to avoid the invasion as well as the reasons Kuwait was designated the 19th Province. The political solutions for this matter were completely removed when America attacked. Hussein claimed Iraq "would have gone the other way" if the United States had not attacked. With political solutions exhausted, two options remained. Iraq could have withdrawn from Kuwait, with attacks against their forces not likely to stop during the withdrawal. Iraq would have been the "laughing stock" of the world. Iraqi forces would have been especially reluctant to fight if Kuwait had not been declared as the 19th Province. The other solution, and the appropriate one, was not to withdraw and to declare Kuwait as the 19th Province so that Iraqi forces would fight with greater vigor.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 20, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-20-2009

Interview Session Number: 8  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro

SSA [redacted]  
SSA [redacted]

Arabic/English Translation: [redacted]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 20, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the three previous discussions, focusing on Hussein's ascendancy to the Presidency.

~~(S)~~ Beginning in 1973, Iraqi President Bakr began having health problems including issues with his heart. Despite these problems, Bakr performed his duties as best as he could. Periodically, Bakr told Hussein that he should retire and that he could no longer fulfill his duties as President. Hussein is unaware whether Bakr made such comments to others within the Ba'ath Party (Party) leadership. Hussein stated Bakr felt "close to Hussein."

~~(S)~~ Around this time, Hussein seriously considered leaving the government but remaining in the Party. His main reason for wanting to leave government was linked to the overthrow of the Ba'ath government in 1963. Hussein believed this overthrow occurred because the Party leadership concentrated on the government and forgot about the Party. Hussein did not like the "power" and his position in the government. When he joined the revolution of 1968, his intention was not to stay in government. Hussein had planned to stay involved only within the cells of the Party at the lower levels. At that time, he believed it would be a "shame" to serve in the government. Until this day, Hussein still does not like government. He likes the people and the Party, but believes it is difficult for the government to judge fairly. Hussein observed individuals he

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described as "kind and gentle" before serving in the government who subsequently became the opposite after their appointments to government positions.

~~(S)~~ After the 1968 revolution, a governing Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was formed. However, the announcement of the RCC was not made until one year later in 1969. The members of the RCC, with the exception of the military members, were not and "did not want to be known." For this reason, the announcement of the RCC was delayed. Hussein was "forced" to take a leadership position in the RCC. Party members asked Hussein whether he wanted the revolution to fail, implying it would without his participation, and that it was his responsibility to be a Party leader.

~~(S)~~ Hussein wanted Bakr to remain as President for as long as possible, describing him as a "nice person." In 1979, however, Bakr contacted Hussein and asked him to meet in Bakr's office in the Presidential Palace. At this meeting, Bakr told Hussein he no longer wanted nor felt able to serve as President. Bakr implored Hussein to assume his duties, telling Hussein if he did not accept the "normal method" of appointment as President, he would use the radio to make an announcement that Hussein was now President. Hussein told Bakr that this means of announcing a successor would not be good for the country, the people, or the Party. Outsiders, or foreigners, especially would have thought something was wrong within Iraq. Thereafter, Tariq Aziz was asked to prepare an announcement regarding the change of leadership. A meeting of the RCC was convened in July, 1979. Hussein is unsure whether he or Bakr called the meeting.

~~(S)~~ At the meeting, Bakr explained to the RCC members that he had wanted to step down since 1973. He further explained to the members that Hussein was ready to assume the Presidency. Hussein described the meeting as being "like a family gathering." There were many emotions present including sadness. The transfer of the Presidency to Hussein was conducted according to the Constitution. Hussein stated a vote was taken, but he does not remember whether it was by secret ballot or by raising hands. He was designated Secretary General of the Party and President of Iraq.

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~~(S)~~ When asked whether Hussein observed any changes in himself upon assuming the Presidency, he responded, "No." He stated he became "stronger and closer to the people."

~~(S)~~ When asked what Hussein believed would have happened to himself if he had been allowed to leave government, Hussein replied that he would have been a regular person, possibly a farmer. He would, however, have continued as a Party member and continued attending meetings of the Party.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer noted his own personal opinion that it would be difficult to imagine Hussein as a farmer. Hussein stated he was afraid to become a public figure. He stated that his situation changed as did his obligations, becoming almost personal. Hussein observed that while he served as President, thousands of people viewed themselves as being close to him. Until 1995, people did not elect him, rather Hussein stated, "The revolution brought me." After 1995 and 2002, the people did, in fact, vote for and elect Hussein. After the elections, his relationship with the people became stronger, and Hussein now felt an obligation to those who had voted for him. Hussein was not only obligated to the people by law, but also to the people "in front of God."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was questioned whether, at the meeting where Bakr announced his resignation, the entire RCC supported his becoming President. Hussein responded there was nothing or no one against him to become the leader. Morally and out of respect for Bakr, some members asked Bakr to stay. Bakr, however, did not allow their wishes to influence his final decision. Hussein viewed Bakr's decision as final because he, himself, could not convince Bakr to remain as President.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer noted reports which stated there was at least one outspoken person at the meeting who questioned Bakr's retirement and stated that Hussein's selection should be unanimous, Muhie Abd Al-Hussein Mashhadi. Hussein stated this information is not correct. There was discussion about Bakr's resignation but no talk about the process for selecting Hussein. Others offered to assume some of Bakr's duties so that he might be able to remain as President. He did not accept these offers, however. At that time, Hussein was Deputy Secretary General of the Party and Vice President of Iraq. As such, he was next in line to become President, a fact which could not have been

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questioned. Additionally, the Constitution specifically stated any selection of the President had to be made by a majority, not unanimous, vote. Some members talked about the possibility of postponing Bakr's resignation. Hussein stated there are former RCC members still alive who can be questioned regarding this matter. The interviewer stated several former RCC members generally agree on the details provided by Hussein about this event. However, some former RCC members also provided information indicating Mashhadi voiced his opposition to Bakr's resignation and Hussein's selection as President at the referenced RCC meeting. Hussein replied that he had told the interviewer all the details known to him.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer stated a plot against Hussein was discovered shortly after Hussein assumed the Presidency. An infamous meeting took place on July 22, 1979 whereupon the details of the plot were revealed to senior members of the Party. The interviewer added that the meeting was recorded on videotape, viewed by the interviewer. Hussein stated this matter was not a secret and the video was given to all Party members. Hussein does not remember whether the meeting was opened with comments by Taha Yasin Ramadan. He acknowledged that Mashhadi was brought before the assembly, admitted his participation in a plot against Hussein involving the Syrian government, and named some of the others who participated in the plot. Hussein's reaction and feelings were the same as anyone who had been betrayed by friends in the Party and the government, sadness and a feeling of being "back-stabbed." This was especially true because the plot involved Arabs outside the government and country. Hussein described these actions as treason and the participants as traitors.

~~(S)~~ Regarding when Hussein became aware of the plot, he responded, "At that time." The interviewer pointed out that Mashhadi was arrested a few days before the meeting, approximately July 15, after Hussein became President. Hussein stated he became President July 17. The interviewer responded that July 17 was the official date, although Hussein had actually assumed the Presidency almost one week prior.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer questioned Hussein as to how the plot was discovered. Hussein asked, "Did you hear the video?" He added that the information on the video should be enough. The interviewer noted the video did not provide details about how the

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plot was discovered. Hussein responded, "These are secrets of the country." He emphasized that he still considered these details secret despite the fact that the event occurred almost 25 years ago.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer then steered the discussion to the video which was not a state secret. The interviewer noted the video depicted several present and future members of the senior leadership. Among those shown were Tariq Aziz and Ali Hasan Al-Majid, who was seen standing and shouting. The video names approximately sixty-six individuals as participants in the plot, including Adnan Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister, and Ghanim Abd Al-Jalil, Director of the Office of the President. Hussein stated Adnan was the Minister of Planning and Secretary of the Committee for Oil and Agreements. Hussein acknowledged that Adnan may have already been appointed as Deputy Prime Minister after Hussein assumed the Presidency and before this meeting. Hussein acknowledged that a total of five RCC members, and none of the original seventy revolutionaries, were implicated in the plot. Hussein denied that any of the conspirators, including Adnan and Ghanim, were his friends. People who worked in the government were not his friends. Hussein stated Adnan and Ghanim were "not close to me." Like others, they were appointed to government positions. Some "made it" while some did not. When pointed out to Hussein that the interviewer saw Hussein crying in the video when Ghanim's name was announced, Hussein responded that, as a human being, he still had feelings. As the head of his office, Hussein saw Ghanim every day delivering various papers. All of the members of the plot were in the leadership. Hussein remarked that treason makes you feel "sorrowful." When noted by the interviewer that one might say Hussein had been betrayed by his closest colleagues, Hussein responded the most important thing is that they were in the government and were with Hussein in the Party.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that over sixty people were implicated, although not all were convicted. Hussein further acknowledged that the names of the "conspirators" were announced by Mashhadi or read by Hussein from a list at the meeting. As the names were announced, the person named was asked to stand up, and, one by one, was escorted from the hall by the Himaya.

~~(S)~~ Thereafter, a tribunal was held to adjudicate the matter and to decide punishment. Hussein stated he does not

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remember the exact number or identities of persons who were found guilty and were executed or imprisoned, or who escaped, or who were found innocent and were released. He acknowledged that the entire matter, including executions, was concluded within approximately sixteen days, or by August 8, 1979. Hussein believes the amount of time used during the process was "more than enough" for an unbiased and impartial trial. Although he believes this was enough time to be fair, Hussein acknowledged there might not have been adequate time to "go deep into things." When asked to clarify this statement, Hussein responded there may have been other conspirators who were not identified. Hussein does not know whether there were other participants, but he reiterated that the information available and the time utilized for the investigation were enough to convict those who were identified. He commented that the law says it is better for one guilty person to go free than for many innocent people to go to jail without being guilty.

(S) Hussein stated he does not know the specific results of the investigation. This matter was decided by a court and the sentences were carried out thereafter. When questioned about Abd Al-Khaliq Al-Samarra'i's involvement and how it was possible for someone already in prison to be a part of such a plot, Hussein responded, "Ask those who did the investigation." When asked to provide the names of the investigators, Hussein stated he does not remember. The interviewer noted that Barzan Al-Tikriti, having just been named Director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS), headed the investigation. Hussein replied that there must have been a committee, but he denied knowledge of the composition of any such committee. He further denied knowing anyone who might know the composition of this committee.

(S) Regarding the involvement of the RCC in this investigation, Hussein first denied knowledge of any details. He observed that if the matter was decided by tribunal, there must have been an official committee. The interviewer reminded Hussein of a speech he gave on August 8, 1979, wherein he stated that the RCC, formerly numbering twenty-one, now included sixteen members due to the implication of five RCC members in the plot. Hussein continued in the speech saying, of the sixteen RCC members, three conducted the investigation and seven formed the tribunal which heard the facts and decided the punishment. In the speech, Hussein added that this was the first time in the

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history of revolutionary movements and human struggle that over half of the supreme leadership of a nation took part in such a matter. Hussein responded to the interviewer, "Good, very good." According to the Constitution, members of the RCC must be tried by other RCC members, not by a tribunal outside of the RCC. When questioned regarding the fairness or neutrality of the RCC conducting a trial of its own members, Hussein replied that fairness existed within the individuals of the RCC. The plot was not against them, it was against Hussein. Additionally, the Constitution, which dictated procedure, existed well before the plot.

~~(S)~~ When questioned regarding previous statements he made saying the plot was against the Party, Hussein replied, "I did not say that. I said it was against Saddam." The conspirators plotted with another country (Syria) to prevent Hussein from coming to power. While it is true Hussein was head of the Party, the plot was against him individually. Hussein believes there were individuals who did not want him in power because he would not be "easy to control." With another person as President, who had conspired with the five members of the RCC and the other country, others would have been able to control Iraq. Hussein acknowledged that a tentative agreement regarding unification of Syria and Iraq was being worked on at the time, specifically through Tariq Aziz. However, the plot ended that discussion/agreement as "anything based on plotting has no value." When questioned what the other country hoped to gain, Hussein responded, "Ask them. We did not ask them."

~~(S)~~ Hussein denied knowledge of any reward being paid to the individual(s) who discovered the plot. When questioned as to the reason for videotaping the meeting on July 22, Hussein stated the video was made in order to inform the Party of what had occurred. He confirmed that, as seen in the video, there were many emotions present, including sadness. The interviewer pointed out that fear appeared to be the most noticeable emotion, first from audience members, and then from those who were named and shouted their innocence upon being ordered to stand. Hussein acknowledged that he, himself, ordered at least one of the named individuals to leave the hall.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer noted three things in the video which seemed to stand out, including Hussein smoking a cigar, the expression on Tariq Aziz' face, and Ali Hasan Al-Majid shouting

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about Al-Samarra'i and his belief that conspiracies would continue as long as Al-Samarra'i was alive. Hussein responded that he knows the meaning behind each example provided by the interviewer. He stated that he rarely smokes unless the "times are difficult." Hussein questioned the expression of Aziz, whether it was a happy or sad one. The interviewer responded that Aziz appeared scared. Hussein stated this "reading" by the interviewer was not correct, "we were all scared." Regarding Ali Hasan, Hussein asked the interviewer whether he was implying Al-Samarra'i was executed simply because of the words of Ali Hasan.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated copies of the video of the July 22, 1979 meeting were sent to Iraqi ambassadors in other countries. The videos were to be used by embassy officials to present information to Iraqis living outside of the country concerning events occurring within Iraq. Hussein denied knowledge of whether the video was shown to leaders of other countries. Hussein remarked, if it was shown to such persons, that would have been "a good thing, not a bad thing." Perhaps the video would have been shown to other leaders because another Arab country was involved in the plot. Regarding whether the video was made and distributed to demonstrate that Hussein was in charge of Iraq, Hussein responded that the interviewer had seen the video and "this is your opinion, you have the right."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer provided comments reportedly made by Hussein around the time of the plot wherein he said, "With our Party methods, there is no chance for any one who disagrees with us to jump on a couple of tanks and overthrow us." Hussein stated he does not remember making such a comment, but believed he could explain as these words were a part of his thinking. This message was directed at not only the other country with whom the conspirators were plotting but also to all Party members.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was questioned about the sincerity of his reported previous statements to Bakr in the 1960s and 1970s wherein he expressed a desire to leave the government. Hussein responded by saying that after 1974, he believed he had a moral obligation to the Iraqi people. After many discussions with President Bakr, Hussein acknowledged it was "his fate." From this time forward, he decided he would accept such an appointment and planned for the Presidency.

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In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 18, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-20-2009

Interview Session Number: 7  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: [REDACTED]

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(S) Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 18, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

(S) Prior to the start of interview, Hussein was informed this session would be a continuation of the two previous discussions. Topics to be covered would include a discussion of Sa'dun Shakir, among others.

(S) Hussein acknowledged that Shakir was an example of someone in the Ba'ath Party (the Party) who had "served out his abilities." Nevertheless, Shakir was someone with whom Hussein maintained contact after his departure from service to the Party.

(S) Hussein first met Shakir in the Taji Prison near Baghdad. Both Hussein and Shakir had been sentenced to prison upon change of the Iraqi government in late 1963 when a coup led by Abd Al-Salem Aref overthrew the Ba'ath government. During 1965 or 1966, Hussein and Shakir were transferred to Prison # 1 also near Baghdad. At some point, Shakir was released but continued visiting Hussein in prison. During this time, their friendship continued and developed more. Eventually, Hussein and Abd Al-Karim Al-Shaykhli escaped from prison with the assistance of Shakir, who served as their driver during the escape.

(S) After escaping from prison, Shakir was still a member of the Party and served in that capacity. During this period, Hussein continued friendly relations with him. He described Shakir as a very trusted person whom Hussein considered as a friend to him and to his children. Shakir was one of the original seventy "revolutionaries" of 1968.

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(S) When questioned regarding positions held in the Party by Shakir, Hussein commented that, like any other leader, Shakir would accept any assignment. Hussein does not remember any of these assignments and stated this was not important. He was a friend and that is what is important. Hussein suggested that the interviewer should ask Shakir in order to confirm this information.

(S) Regarding whether Shakir was Director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service (IIS), Hussein replied it is well-known that he was the IIS Director. The interviewer opined that it is generally accepted that someone in charge of an organization such as an intelligence service should have certain qualifications and abilities prior to appointment to such a position. Hussein replied, "We were all young revolutionaries." As such, they did not have the necessary experience and learned "on the job." Hussein added that regarding management matters, they learned from the Party. Hussein stated leading people is the most difficult thing in life. Whoever can lead people in the Party, and the masses, will be effective in their jobs. Hussein continued saying Party members "gave it a try" with some succeeding and some failing. Party members continued in their positions until the responsibilities of their work overcame their individual abilities. At this point, they were replaced. Regarding Party members with a military background, Hussein noted this military experience was limited and did not necessarily translate into something useful for governmental affairs.

(S) Hussein acknowledged Shakir served as IIS Director at an important time of the revolution. He noted, however, that the entire history of a revolution is important. Perhaps, Shakir did not serve at the most critical time. Hussein added, "Difficulties become larger when the job becomes larger."

(S) The interview then turned to a discussion of Shaykhli. Hussein acknowledged Shaykhli was a fellow revolutionary and a friend. Hussein and Shaykhli participated in the assassination attempt against Iraqi President Qassem in 1959. Each escaped Iraq and fled to Damascus, Syria. There, Hussein and Shaykhli's friendship and brotherhood continued and grew stronger. After Syria, their friendship continued upon moving to Cairo together.

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~~(S)~~ After the first Ba'ath revolution of 1963, Hussein and Shaykhli returned to Iraq together. Upon return, Hussein worked with farmers and Shaykhli worked investigations at the Qasr Al-Nihayya (The Palace of the End). Later, Shaykhli was appointed military attache to Lebanon.

~~(S)~~ Upon overthrow of the Ba'ath government by Aref in late 1963, Hussein and Shaykhli went "underground" together. They remained "underground" until the July, 1968 revolution in Iraq and the resumption of power by the Ba'ath Party. Thereafter, Hussein and Shaykhli served in the Party leadership together until 1971.

~~(S)~~ Hussein commented that Shaykhli had a very good mind but did not concentrate and focus on the job at hand. According to Hussein, Shaykhli liked to "live and entertain himself." Hussein told Shaykhli how the Party perceived him. Later, the majority of Party leadership voted to remove Shaykhli from his position. He was later murdered in Baghdad in 1980.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer pointed out that Hussein had omitted some details of his relationship with Shaykhli including the fact that the two of them had served in prison at the same time after the 1963 overthrow of the Ba'ath government, becoming friends. As is commonly understood, the interviewer also noted Shaykhli once saved Hussein's life. Hussein responded, "In what sense?" The interviewer then relayed the details of an incident during the "underground" years of the Ba'ath between 1963 and 1968. According to the story, Hussein was at Shaykhli's apartment late one night. Hussein decided to leave the apartment and spend the night at a location where weapons for the Party were stored. However, Shaykhli convinced Hussein to remain at his place. Later, the same night, the weapons storage location was raided by the police. Some believe Hussein might have been killed, or at a minimum, arrested if he had been at the location.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged this story is true and that he was with Shaykhli at this time. However, he stated the police could not have captured or killed him. With Shaykhli driving, Hussein went to the weapons location the next morning. Upon arrival, a policeman at the location put the barrel of his machine gun in Hussein's side as he rang the bell of the house. Simultaneously, Shaykhli sped away from the location in the car.

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Hussein explained that although Shaykhli was a brave man, people react differently in different situations.

X(S) At that time, Hussein was not widely known and was someone who would not have been recognized. As such, the policeman did not recognize him. Hussein pretended not to know anything and asked whether this was "Mohammed's" residence. Hussein was not concerned about being shot or killed as the police in Iraq do not kill someone easily, unless their life is seriously threatened. Additionally, people in Iraq generally "know each other" and there are many tribal influences. Even if the law permits such conduct, tribes will seek revenge. Hussein continued his story saying he surprised the policeman by pushing his machine gun aside and pulling a pistol which he (Hussein) had concealed under his shirt. Hussein ordered the policeman to place his hands on Hussein's car, which had been previously left at the location and was likely the reason the house was discovered. Hussein did not want to kill the officer, but decided to fire a round in the air over the policeman's head. The gun malfunctioned, however, and Hussein "reloaded." He told the policeman he would fire one round over his head, and if he moved, a second round into his body. He then fired a round over the policeman's head and the officer "became like a dog." A standoff then occurred as some of Hussein's "comrades" had been arrested by the police inside the house. These "comrades" heard all the activity outside and told the police their comrade Saddam had arrived with a big group and would kill the policemen. Simultaneously, one of the men in the car with Shaykhli returned to the house with a machine gun. The police then acquiesced to the "comrades" in the house asking them for their help and to be saved from Hussein and his men. Thereafter, the standoff ended without bloodshed. Hussein ended this portion of the discussion saying there are many stories from the "underground" period, all of them like "scenes in the movies."

X(S) Hussein was told that Shaykhli was described, similar to Hussein, as a prominent and popular Party member at that time. Hussein responded there is no need and it is not important to compare one person to another. Each person is different, one is not better than the other.

X(S) Hussein acknowledged Shaykhli served as Foreign Minister until 1971, whereupon he was removed from this position by the leadership. Hussein stated that removal of any individual

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from a position requires a decision by the leadership. Not all may agree on the removal, but a majority was required. In Hussein's opinion, Shaykhli could have continued his service to the Party and the government. At that time, Hussein believed Shaykhli could have been "criticized" and given the chance to correct his behavior. Shaykhli would never have been elected as a Party member without the support of Hussein. Because of Shaykhli's lack of concentration on his work and failure to accept criticism, the Party leadership was "not convinced" of him and decided on his removal.

~~(S)~~ Regarding whether Shaykhli was viewed as a potential successor to President Bakr, Hussein did not agree and said this statement was too strong. Hussein commented that it appeared as if the interviewer was implying that he removed those from leadership viewed as a threat to Hussein's position of leadership. From the underground days, Hussein was already in charge. While in prison, the Ba'ath leadership sent a letter notifying Hussein of their recommendation that he become a member of the Ba'ath Party Central Committee. Hussein answered the letter, "What good am I in prison?" He asked the Party to find someone else, however, they did not listen to his opinion. Thereafter, Bakr and Hussein served as two members of the Central Committee, a body considered above the Regional Committee and all other Party components. Bakr served as Secretary General and Hussein served as Deputy Secretary General while "underground."

~~(S)~~ Hussein commented that it is embarrassing to talk about one's own positions. His status in the Party was known, even before the revolution. All those appointed to Party positions, dead or alive today, deserved these appointments. Basically, it came down to who was elected. Hussein stated, "It is difficult to talk about myself." Within the Party, members do not like to talk about themselves. Hussein had recommended that members not talk about themselves.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer pointed out that it is commonly believed, both inside and outside Iraq, that Hussein's potential rivals in the Party were eliminated during the period between the 1968 revolution and Hussein's ascendancy to the Presidency in 1979. Hussein denied that those on the inside of Iraq would say or believe such information. He agreed that this information could have come from outside Iraq. According to Hussein, this

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conclusion is the opinion of these people and not necessarily a fact.

~~(S)~~ Regardless of the information, Hussein stated any examination of this idea needs to be conducted logically. Hussein stated there are many examples in history throughout the world of similar ascensions to power after a revolution. In Egypt, Nasser and Sadat were the only individuals who "stayed" with the revolution, with Nasser eventually becoming leader of the country. In France, a single soldier, Napoleon, became the leader of the country after the French Revolution when others gave up. American history is also full of examples of this phenomenon. In Hussein's opinion, these are the "revolutionary ways."

~~(S)~~ According to Hussein, previous uprisings, such as the French Revolution, were tragedies when compared to the times in which we now live. Revolutions are a new step in government, not a "liberal way" where someone is chosen and groomed to be a leader. Revolutions come from the people.

~~(S)~~ The 1968 revolution in Iraq included seventy "revolutionaries." Very few of them continued in government and/or Party service after the revolution. Some were appointed to positions and performed well, some did not. All of them did not have the ability to lead and be professional. Some continued in service while others dropped out over time. Hussein stated they all were servants of the people.

~~(S)~~ When questioned whether he believed Nasser became a dictator, Hussein replied that he did not agree. Upon responding to a request from the interviewer to define dictatorship, Hussein stated this is a form of government where one person rules alone, without a parliament, council, or committee. Hussein did not agree with the characterization that Nasser's government fit this definition. Hussein stated Nasser had a parliament. However, a parliament is not possible at the beginning of a revolution. Normally, a revolutionary council is first established and is later followed by a parliament or people's committee. Hussein does not like comparing Iraq and its 1968 revolution to Nasser and Egypt. Nasser was a military person who did not have a political party. In Iraq, the Ba'ath had a Party ranging from the cells in villages all the way to the leadership as well as a

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parliament elected by the people. The leadership of the Party and the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) discussed everything.

~~(S)~~ When asked whether Hussein and Shaykhli remained friends after Shaykhli's departure from Party service, Hussein stated his friends were among those with whom he met regularly in the leadership. He did not have any friends outside of the Party and the leadership. A true friendship has "obligations." Hussein considered Shakir as the person closest to him after the 1968 revolution. Whenever Hussein needed to discuss something, he would send for Shakir and they would have lunch together and talk. After Shakir left government service, Hussein does not remember how many times they met. Hussein stated Shaykhli "kept up good relations" with his sons Qusay and Uday. Regarding Shaykhli and the period of time after his departure from government service, Hussein's feelings of friendship remained the same, but the two did not spend the same amount of time together. Due to the demands of work, Hussein did not have time to associate with those outside of work, the Party, or the leadership.

~~(S)~~ When questioned whether he had special feelings about Shaykhli, who was shot and killed in Baghdad in 1980, Hussein stated, "Yes." Regarding whether Shaykhli's killer(s) were captured, Hussein responded, "I don't think so." An investigation took place, but the crime was not solved. Hussein stated that not all crimes committed are ultimately solved. He added that other crimes, including those committed against his cousins and those involving the deaths of various Iraqi dignitaries and ministers, remain unsolved. Hussein noted that not all crimes are solved elsewhere in the world, such as in America, France, or Italy. When questioned whether it was unusual for a crime involving the murder of a former government minister, a former revolutionary, and a former friend of the President of Iraq to go unsolved, Hussein retorted, "What do you want to say. Why are you going around the subject?" There are others who were close to Hussein in the leadership who were targets of assassination attempts, including Tariq Aziz, Uday Hussein, and others. These crimes remain unsolved as well. It happens in Iraq, just as it happens elsewhere in the world.

~~(S)~~ Hussein ended the session acknowledging the possibility that some people may say Shaykhli was killed by the Iraqi government. He added that some people might say anything.

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Logically, those who would say this are probably the same people who said Shaykhli could have become President.

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In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 16, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-20-2009

Interview Session Number: 6  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 16, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ At the beginning of the interview, Hussein was informed that today's dialogue would be a continuation of yesterday's discussion regarding the years following the 1968 revolution and about prominent members of the Ba'ath Party.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer mentioned to Hussein that he understood that the attempted coup in 1973 was undertaken by a protege of Hussein, Nadhim Kazzar, Director of the Ba'ath Party's Security Service and a Shi'a from the city of Al-Amarah. Hussein related that at the time, the Party did not know which members were Sunni or Shi'a Muslims or Christians. As an example, he pointed out that it was not until later that he learned that one of the Party's leaders, Tariq Aziz, was a Christian. The Party was successful because it related to the people, and, thus, no distinction was made on members based on their religion or ethnicity.

~~(S)~~ Hussein related that among the Party's leadership between 1958-63, very few members were Sunni. The Secretary General was Shi'a from the city of Al-Nasiriyah. Hussein claimed that when he attempted to assassinate President Qassem in 1959, he knew nothing about the Sunnis and Shi'as. In 1963, with the exception of two or three Party members, almost all members of the Ba'ath Party were Shi'as. After the revolution, people began inquiring which members were Sunni and which were Shi'a. At the time, it was difficult to know because they were all mixed together. However, by 1968, nearly all Party members were Sunnis. Because the Party had previously operated secretly, few knew or cared about one's religion. However, after the

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revolution, people in the government began talking more frequently about this issue. Many were concerned that promotions and demotions were being decided on the basis on one's sect or religious affiliation. Hussein stated, "You would be surprised to know that the Secretary General of the Party in 1964 was Kurdish."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked about a perception that Nadhim Kazzar was Hussein's "right-hand man" and that at one time, he was considered a threat to take over President Bakr's regime. Hussein refuted this characterization by saying that he was not his right hand man in the government and that each person has their own duties and responsibilities. He said that although Kazzar was neither a revolutionary nor among the seventy individuals who took over the Presidential Palace, he was a good Party member and a tough individual while he was in prison.

~~(S)~~ Kazzar was not convinced that the military would be good for the Ba'ath Party. He was influenced by the thoughts of Party members who split and believed in a communist socialist philosophy. Kazzar considered the military members of the Party to be old-fashioned and a burden. Despite his perspective, however, Kazzar decided to remain with the Party. Hussein had no information whether Kazzar had met with officials in Iran. He related that when Kazzar's coup failed, Kazzar fled to Iran but was arrested before he arrived at the border. Hussein said he did not want to talk "bad" about Kazzar. He said that when Kazzar "arrested" the Minister of Defense Hammad Shihab and Minister of Interior Sa'dun Ghaydan, it was done easily and did not require a big plan.

~~(S)~~ While discussing Kazzar, Hussein digressed and characterized this period as being the best time for Iraq because "we nationalized oil, settled oil disputes with the oil companies and invested money in Thoura City," which was later renamed, Saddam City.

~~(S)~~ According to Hussein, the psychology of the Ba'ath Party was to recruit young individuals at the beginning of their schooling such as when they were in elementary and secondary school. The Party seldom recruited members from colleges. Their philosophy was that they wanted a person they could mold to "grow" into the Party. In the 1950's and 1960's, the Party accepted primarily young people and only a few older individuals.

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Some Party members such as Kazzar questioned the allegiance of newer officers to the Ba'ath Party.

~~(S)~~-(S) The interviewer mentioned to Hussein that many people believed Kazzar's plan to kill Bakr went awry after Kazzar learned that President Bakr's plane had been delayed and then incorrectly assumed that his plot had been exposed. The interviewer continued stating that Kazzar then kidnapped Ministers Shihab and Ghaydan as hostages and fled to the border of Iran where he was captured by Hussein. Hussein responded by saying, "Your information is not specific. According to my information, President Bakr's plane was not delayed, and his guards were awaiting his arrival." Hussein waited at the airport for Bakr and after Bakr arrived, he accompanied him to the Presidential Palace where the two drank tea together. Hussein later excused himself so that Bakr could visit with his family. Hussein was then driven by his staff through Baghdad. As they were driving, they heard an announcement on the police radio that a coup had been attempted by Ministers Shihab and Ghaydan. Because of the importance of this matter, Hussein pushed his driver to the side and proceeded to drive the car himself to his residence which was located near the President's residence. Near the gate of his residence, Hussein used a telephone to call Bakr, who asked where Hussein was located because he had something very important to relate. Hussein answered that he was nearby, and that he had heard the news. Hussein met with Bakr at his residence. Bakr told Hussein that Ministers Shihab and Ghaydan had attempted a coup, saying that he had tried calling Minister Shihab, but received no answer. Hussein advised Bakr that he had an "intuition" about Kazzar and believed it was Kazzar who had attempted the coup, not the two Ministers. Hussein subsequently asked Bakr to call the Military Division and prepare to go after Kazzar and "to hit him before he crossed the border into Iran."

~~(S)~~ Near the borders of Iran were tribes where Hussein and Sa'dun Shakir used to go hunting. After the revolution, Hussein had given these tribes many rifles. An announcement was put out on the radio to arrest Kazzar and inform the nearest Ba'ath Party unit. Members of a tribe who became aware of this through the radio, saw Kazzar's caravan, surrounded it and detained him. Special Operations helicopters were then dispatched to pick up Kazzar and return him to Baghdad.

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~~(S)~~ After Bakr obtained a clear picture of what had occurred, he started crying, picked up his belongings and went from his palace to his residence. According to Hussein, Bakr said that he did not want to be President. Bakr told Hussein he wanted Hussein to remain in the government so he could "slip out." Hussein claimed to have made a similar statement to Bakr about also wanting to leave the government.

~~(S)~~ Following this, Hussein told people not to bother Bakr and to let him stay at home. Hussein then began arresting the alleged conspirators of this coup. He called Bakr to inform him that some of the conspirators were members of the Ba'ath Party leadership. Hussein then began organizing a meeting between himself, Bakr and leaders of the Ba'ath Party Central and National Committees.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked how he knew that Kazzar would be fleeing to Iran. He answered that when the announcement went out on the radio to look for Kazzar, people started calling in sightings of him. Gradually, it was those periodic sightings that led him to believe that Kazzar was heading towards Iran.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked if Kazzar called President Bakr, and he said, "No." Hussein said that apparently Kazzar's vehicle had become stuck in the mud. When he solicited the assistance of local farmers, they called for help. It was around this time that Kazzar shot Ministers Shihab and Gaydan. Shihab survived by pretending that he was dead.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was questioned whether Kazzar had called President Bakr to negotiate the release of the hostages, and at the same time selected Abd Al-Khaliq Al-Samarra'i's residence as a place to meet. Hussein denied this, stating that there was announcement on the emergency radio band that a coup had been attempted and that all party members should meet at Abd Al-Khaliq Al-Samarra'i's residence. Hussein did not know why this house was chosen as the meeting location, but suspected that the Party members were being called to one location to be arrested. When asked whether Samarra'i was implicated in the coup simply because of the meeting, Hussein answered that a "committee" took care of this. Hussein does not remember who headed the "committee," including whether it was Izzat Ibrahim Al-Duri. Hussein stated, "I do not want to make a mistake on the details regarding something which I am not one hundred percent sure." Hussein

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acknowledged that Samarra'i had been a Ba'ath member since 1968. When asked if Samarra'i spoke out on issues, Hussein said, "The Ba'ath Party talked freely. This is only a media interpretation that people could not talk." Hussein stated that there are members of the Party still available, and he suggested that the interviewers talk to them. Hussein was asked if he was surprised by the allegations against Samarra'i. He responded, "When we give someone in the Party something to do, we trust them. These and other things happen in a revolution."

~~(S)~~ Hussein then stated, "Whether I am the first person or the second person, all the questions come back to me. I am not afraid of taking responsibility in front of the law or the people. You have to put blame not just on the leadership, but also on the people who conspired such as Samarra'i." Hussein added, "I want you to understand clearly about the situation. Yesterday, we talked about the fact that Nayif and Hardan were killed overseas. Ibrahim Daud was not killed. If the Iraqi government is being accused of all this, why did they not kill Daud?"

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, "As I recall, Bakr ruled until 1979 but was not called a dictator, but after I ruled, they called me a dictator." Hussein then asked, "After 1979, who was killed or assassinated inside or outside of Iraq? Who was executed from the Ministries or out of the leadership after 1979?"

~~(S)~~ Following these questions, the interviewer said that these are unanswered questions which needed to be clarified for the sake of history. Hussein said, "It's not enough to ask me. You should ask other leaders. I advise you to talk to others." Hussein said he was not worried about answering questions.

~~(S)~~ The interviewer told Hussein that he (Hussein) was answering the questions for the same reasons they were being asked, for the sake of history. Hussein replied, "Sometimes, you see me upset because some things are dark. During this period, we had good and bad times. We laughed and joked. Samarra'i served, and we made jokes with him. He made mistakes. We moved on. I hope you will be just in what history you (the interviewers) write."

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~~(S)~~ The interviewer told Hussein, "Fortunately or unfortunately, I will have a major impact on your history." Hussein agreed and replied, "Nobody can say I have no bias. People think what they want. Everyone has his own opinions. People are not a computer. We all have flesh and blood."

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 15, 2004

DECLASSIFIED BY uc/baw 60324  
ON 05-06-2009

Interview Session Number: 5  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
Arabic/English Translation: SSA [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 15, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Prior to any questions being asked, Hussein stated that he wanted to ask a question. He then asked what kind of changes have taken place in the world, i.e., with China and Russia, and in international politics. The interviewer related that there has not been a lot of significant changes, that efforts are underway to rebuild Iraq and this includes support from Russia and China, and that things are moving forward rapidly.

~~(S)~~ Hussein then explained that since he has been in prison for one or two months, he does not have a picture of what is happening. He indicated that he had intended to ask the interviewer this question two days earlier. Hussein discussed a movie he saw, based on a book, A Tale of Two Cities, which he had read long ago, in which a British man imprisoned in a French jail is likewise out of touch with what is happening in the outside world. According to Hussein, the author of this book was critical of French authorities for this treatment. Hussein noted that nothing had changed since that time. The interviewer responded that "Over time, some things have changed; others have not."

~~(S)~~ The interviewer informed Hussein that today's session would be a dialogue about the 1968 takeover by the Ba'ath Party, in particular trying to distinguish fact from legend. Hussein responded by stating in effect that in 1968, Iraq was living in a primitive way and could only advance itself seriously by understanding two concepts. The first was to recognize that the country had historical precedence for change as demonstrated

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in previous ages. The second concept involved the recognition that Iraq could learn by examining the way the rest of the world operated. Accordingly, Hussein and others traveled to other Arab countries. In comparing themselves with other locales, they discovered that Cairo and Damascus were far more advanced than Baghdad. Hussein had many friends who traveled to Damascus who believed that Iraq could reach the level of development in Damascus, but they could not imagine reaching the level of development of Cairo.

(S) Iraq's manufacturing ability at the time was limited to making blankets and to operating a canning factory in Karbala which needed to import its materials. Aside from these, there were only a few other simple attempts at manufacturing in other fields. However, Iraq was motivated and had the energy to advance itself. Early efforts resulted in mistakes, but these were corrected. As they progressed, they continued to send people to countries around them in order to gain experience. Among the countries which Hussein and others visited were the Soviet Union, France, Spain, Iran, Turkey and all the Arab countries. In all of these, Hussein believed that the Soviet Union was the closest match to Iraq in terms of the social life of its people. However, this did not mean that Hussein took sides between the East and the West. Hussein stated that while looking at the ways in which others live, we "don't forget we are Arabs and Iraqis and that Iraqis have their own way of co-existing and relating with other Arabs." Hussein added, "Looking at our aims to develop, we tried going for development in all aspects including, political, economic, technological and industrial."

(S) Concerning the Ba'ath Party takeover, Hussein acknowledged that they had help from the military who were members of the party. He also acknowledged that Colonel Ibrahim Abd Al-Rahman Da'ud and Colonel Abd Al-Razzaq Nayif, non-Ba'ath members of the military, helped with the takeover. He added that the two had not played an important role in allowing the takeover to be undertaken without resistance or bloodshed.

(S) Hussein stated that the decision not to have bloodshed was done at his request, that it was his belief that "we had to forget the past and not have more bloodshed." He claimed that this matter was discussed at a meeting at the home of the Minister of Health, Dr. Mustafa. A few members disagreed

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with Hussein, especially party members who had been tortured by the previous regime and wanted revenge. A dialogue ensued and Hussein said that he, too, had been tortured. Eventually, an agreement was made that there would be no bloodshed. As evidence that this decision was honored, Hussein pointed out that the Ba'athists did not harm President Abdul Rahman Aref, but just expelled him. Additionally, he advised that his party made a decision to release prisoners from all parties including nationalists and communists. Concerning Colonel Da'ud and Colonel Nayif, Hussein related that they chose not to harm them either, but simply to expel them.

~~(S)~~ When asked about Colonel Da'ud's role in the military, Hussein stated that it was Abu Haitham (Ahmad Hassan Al-Bakr) who had a stronger voice than Da'ud, who had no real voice.

~~(S)~~ Hussein advised the Presidential protection, the Republican Guard, consisted of three divisions: Armored, Infantry and Special Forces. Colonel Da'ud's responsibility was not to clash or fight with the Armored Division. This was his only role. Hussein said, "We controlled the Armored Division; I commanded a tank and fired on the Presidential Palace." He said, "Practically, we could have done without both Da'ud and Nayif."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, "We got news in the afternoon before the attack that Nayif was offering to join the revolution. Apparently, Da'ud had told him about our plans even though we had told Da'ud to keep our plans a secret. As a result, several members wanted to postpone our plans. At the first stage of the revolution, we discovered that Nayif and Da'ud had been planning among themselves and that they had been contacting other officers outside our line of communication. So, we took removed them on 31 July. It was me who led the operation."

~~(S)~~ According to Hussein, Da'ud was sent to Jordan on a military assignment. Hussein added, "We could have taken him anytime. I went to Nayif with a gun; I didn't have an automatic weapon. With one gun, I took all the weapons from Nayif and his staff." Since Da'ud was serving with a military corp in Jordan, Hussein sent Ba'ath members to arrest him and bring him back to Baghdad. "However, he said that Da'ud and Nayif "were like a knife in our back."

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~~(S)~~ Contrary to popular accounts of Nayif's arrest, Hussein advised that Nayif was not invited to lunch at President Al-Bakr's house. The arrest actually took place at the Presidential Palace. According to Hussein, "We had lunch at the Presidential Palace everyday during the thirteen days after the revolution because decisions had to be made. We were always in the Palace as was President Al-Bakr. Others attended when meals were served. When Nayif arrived, I pulled a gun on him. He carried a gun too. It was like a movie. I put Barzan Ibrahim Hasan, my half brother, in the room to guard Nayif. When I arrested Nayif, he said, 'I have four children,' so I told him that his children would be taken care of. I told him to sit there and then I asked him where he wanted to go for an assignment as an ambassador." At first, Nayif said he wanted to go to Lebanon. Because Hussein considered Lebanon to be a place where conspiracies are made, he told Nayif to choose another location. Nayif then asked to go to Algeria, but Hussein denied this request because Algeria was having their own revolution. Then, Nayif asked to go to Morocco, and Hussein agreed. Hussein took Nayif to the airport in a car and sat beside him. Other Ba'ath members were in the car as well. Hussein told Nayif, "When I promise something, I do it. We promised that nothing would happen to President Aref and nothing happened. Friends know I keep my word." Hussein told Nayif that "he would be in a safe place, that no one would hurt him, but that he would have to obey."

~~(S)~~ Hussein laughed as he recalled the story about Nayif and wanted to relate to the interviewer additional details. He remembered telling Nayif, "When the guards salute, you salute back. If you try to think about doing something, remember I am next to you." He told Nayif, "When you go as an ambassador, act like one. We'll notice if you are planning something or not." Hussein recalled that at the time of Nayif's departure, they (the new Ba'ath Party) failed to ask Moroccan officials for permission before dispatching Nayif as ambassador. At the time, Hussein and others were young student revolutionaries and did not know about such things.

~~(S)~~ As Nayif boarded the plane for Morocco at the Rasheed Camp (military airport), Hussein returned Nayif's gun to him. Hussein described the scene as being, "just like a movie."

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~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked why, if Nayif represented a potential threat to the Ba'ath Party, he was appointed as ambassador. Hussein repeated that they did not want bloodshed anymore. He stated that during the 1959 coup, Ba'ath Party members were tied to cars and dragged through the streets until death. Virgins were hanged on electric poles. There was killing in the streets. When the Ba'ath Party came to power in 1963, people were executed out of revenge. Hussein reiterated that it was his opinion at the time that they needed to forget about the past and prohibit revenge. Hussein stated, "As part of this thinking, we started our arrests of Da'ud and Nayif and went on. Da'ud wanted to be the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, so we sent him there."

~~(S)~~ In the early 1960s, there was a lot of violence against Ba'athists by the communists. Hussein maintained that when the Ba'athists subsequently took control, however, they did not do to the communists or others what the communists had done to them, at least not to the same extent. He advised that they took the communists to court and acknowledged that some (approximately five or six) were executed. He advised that they released communists, Nasserites, Kurds and members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had been previously imprisoned!

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Nayif was killed on his doorstep in London and that following this, thirteen Iraqi diplomats were expelled from the country. When Hussein was told that some people believe that Nayif was executed by members of the Iraqi Security Service, Hussein answered, "God killed Nayif. Nayif started acting in a way against the country. He gave his word that he wouldn't act against his country. He went to Iran, then met Barzani in Northern Iraq, and according to information, he met with Moshe Dayan (Israeli Defense Minister). These were all considered bad acts. As to who killed him, that's something else. Only God knows." When Hussein was asked if he knew who killed Nayif, Hussein answered, "I told you, God knows." Pressed further, Hussein said, "I told you in a very clear way." As to Da'ud's fate, Hussein stated, "maybe he's still alive, but he wasn't treasonous. There was nothing recorded against him." When asked what the Iraqi government's action was regarding Nayif, Hussein stated, "I am not sure, but I think we warned him. I cannot remember." Hussein was then asked if Nayif could have been arrested, imprisoned and punished, instead of executed, and that some people believe that an order was given to execute him.

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Hussein replied, "What people think is something else, but I gave you my answer."

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that after the revolution other key figures such as Salih Mahdi Ammash and Hardan Al-Tikriti were removed. Asked if they were removed because they were viewed by the Ba'ath Party as a threat, Hussein answered that compared with coups elsewhere in the world, fewer officials were removed from the government. Hussein stated, although positions may change, relationships do not. As an example, Ammash's daughter became a member of the leadership. His half brother, Barzan, was a revolutionary who rode in the same tank as Hussein which fired on the main gate of the Presidential Palace on the 17th of July. He took many positions but never moved up again. Hussein pointed out that other revolutionaries "ran out of gas," and fewer were able to serve for a long time.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked about Izzat Ibrahim Al Duri and Tariq Aziz. Hussein described Aziz as being an old-time comrade, very respected in the party, but he was not one of the revolutionaries. Hussein said, "I am talking about seventy persons who went into the Presidential palaces." Hussein identified Izzat Ibrahim Al Duri and Taha Yasin Ramadan as having been in the revolution from the beginning until now. He said they had struggled, but that they continue in leadership to this day.

~~(S)~~ Hussein brought up the subject of Sa'dun Shakir who he claimed to be his lifelong friend. Shakir helped Saddam escape from prison. He stated, "Shakir was waiting for me in the car when we fled, actually, we didn't flee; we had an agreement with the guards". Hussein stated, "Shakir was the driver. He's very dear to me". He added, "When he had nothing more to give, we kept our friendship and love and then we went on from there. It happens. The right people are picked at the right time."

~~(S)~~ Asked about his comment that some revolutionaries run out of gas and that few are able to serve the revolution for an extended period of time, Hussein replied that there were only about six or seven such individuals. When pointed out that some may consider that he, Hussein, may have "run out of gas," Hussein laughed and said, "I don't get upset at questions that go for the truth. First, I wasn't in the government from the beginning. If you were talking about me as President, then no one was saying I

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had run out of gas. I only started in 1979. Before that, there was someone above me. The two individuals within the leadership that could have told Hussein he no longer benefited the Party were Hardan Al-Tikriti and Salih Ammash.

~~(S)~~ Considering the time since Hussein was in the tank that fired on the palace through his assumption of leadership in the RCC and his presidency, Hussein was asked, "Your service has been one of the longest; Is it coincidence?" Hussein replied, "They could have said that. This subject is more deep than the details that you give. A leader is not made in a factory in Europe. Leadership is developed gradually. This was done underground." Hussein's opinion at the time was that Al-Bakr should be the President. Hussein stated that he was elected as Deputy Chairman of the Party before the revolution. Hussein said, "I don't like the government, but I like to be in the Party. Notice my speeches, I never say the government; I always say the Party."

~~(S)~~ Hussein advised that he considers himself to be a revolutionary, not a politician. In both 1968 and 1974, he asked the Party to allow him to be excused from his official position. However, the Party refused his request.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked about Hardan Al-Tikriti being killed in Kuwait and was told that people blamed the Iraqi Security Service. Hussein said that Hardan had not been sent to Kuwait, that he thought Hardan had been appointed as an ambassador somewhere else, perhaps Spain. In any event, Hussein denied knowing the reason why Hardan was killed nor did he acknowledge that the Security Service killed him.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked about Iraqi leaders being killed in different parts of the world. The interviewer asked whether these leaders posed a threat, was it merely a coincidence, was it purposeful, or did he find it strange? Hussein replied by saying, "The question should be asked of the Kuwaitis."

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In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 10, 2004

Interview Session Number: 3  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 10, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Hussein provided his comments regarding the Palestinian situation. Any attempt to understand the roots of the problems surrounding the Palestinian issue should be made from the viewpoint of an Arab, and not just as a Palestinian. The problem is not only a Palestinian one but also an Arab one. In the 1960s, many revolutions occurred in Arab countries with the uprisings generally taking place as the result of the dissatisfaction of the people with the rulers of those times. Part of the reason leaders were removed was their failure to address the Palestinian issue adequately or ignoring it altogether. Any solution to the problem should be based on fairness and international law. International law, and its application, created the problem in 1948 upon formation of the separate Jewish state of Israel from lands previously claimed by the Palestinians. A solution, from foreigners and those "internal" to the issue, must be presented in that scope. Everyone has been looking for a solution. However, Hussein stated, "A solution that does not convince the majority of Palestinians will not be successful." The foundation of any such solution, and the final outcome, must be the establishment of a separate state of Palestine.

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~~(S)~~ When questioned about a speech he once gave regarding the 1968 revolution in Iraq, Hussein agreed that he commented in the speech "we did not revolt against a person, we revolted against the system of government." He further agreed that he stated the revolution was undertaken "to move Iraqi people, the country, the Arab world as a whole, and the Palestinians forward." Hussein added the Ba'ath Party was the only political party that demonstrated against the Iraqi government in 1967.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War in 1967, Hussein stated that Arabs had hoped that lands lost in 1948 would be won back. Hussein stated, "We were sad when that did not happen." Although expectations were low for success, the news was especially disheartening when details were provided about the rapid defeat of the Egyptian and Syrian military forces. People of the Arab world became "sad and depressed" and developed a feeling of revolution.

~~(S)~~ Even though the 1967 war was lost, Hussein still respected Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser after the war. In Hussein's opinion, Nasser "could represent the Arabs to the world" while others were "weak." At that time, Nasser was the only ruler with a close relationship to the "Arab masses." Despite losing the war, Nasser did not lose the respect of the people. The hopes of the people, however, were greater than the result Nasser could deliver. Losing the war showed the limits of the capabilities of Nasser and the Egyptian military forces. Hussein pointed out that the war also exposed internal issues in the Egyptian leadership. Abdul Hakim Ammer, head of the Egyptian military, would not permit Nasser's "interference" in military matters "even though Nasser was head of the country." When Nasser later resigned, millions of Egyptians protested for him to resume his duties as President. Hussein opined that it seemed "Nasser depended on international politics rather than preparation of his military and people" leading up to the war. When he died in 1970, citizens "cried for him."

~~(S)~~ Regarding the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Egyptian President Sadat, who served as Vice President under Nasser, "could not bring back the hopes of the Arabs." Sadat seemed not to have a specific cause or aim and was unable to do anything about 1948 and the "rape of Palestine." Because Sadat was not a "man of cause," Egyptian soldiers were not "motivated" by him.

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Similarly, the people of Egypt were not motivated. In fact, during this time, Egyptians mocked their own soldiers making jokes about the military saying they did not fight in 1967. Sadat did, however, through his own personality, make the United States and Israel believe he could win a war with Israel.

~~(S)~~ When questioned about Sadat's ability to ultimately do more for his people than Nasser, particularly with respect to bringing peace and reclaiming territory, Hussein stated Nasser's effect was "nominal." Hussein added, "If you tell Iraqis Kuwait will be a part of Iraq, they will be happy." The Arab nation, from poor to wealthy individuals, is one nation with the same language, common borders, and the same aims. There is one Arab world, from the "simple person to the lawmakers and thinkers." The strength of any person in a "family" comes from cooperation with and love of each other in the "family." If a member of the "family" does not understand this, he will be "weak and fall." Sadat was not faithful to "family" matters. Prior to the 1967 war, the West Bank and Jerusalem were under control of Jordan while Gaza was under control of Egypt. Sadat's peace agreement with the Israelis failed to return the territories to the rightful owners, the Palestinians. Thus, Sadat was a "traitor to the cause." Israel only willingly returned the Sinai Peninsula as it was a "military burden" and was an easy "political move."

~~(S)~~ Sadat lost honor as a result of agreements made with Israel. Additionally, the Egyptian economy worsened significantly under his leadership. In contrast, Egypt's economy flourished under Nasser with its markets opened to all Arab countries.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, "Being at peace is not easy." Peace without a cause will create a change in balance. Regarding a comment made to a British journalist approximately two years ago, Hussein did not mean peace could be achieved by losing faith and prestige. On the contrary, any peace should be negotiated to a "favorable position of power."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Iraq fought in the 1973 war on two fronts, with its air forces contributing in Egypt and Syria and ground forces fighting in Syria. When asked whether Iraq could have done more, Hussein responded, "What more could we have done? We sent all of our military to fight under Egyptian and Syrian command." Prior to the war, Egypt had sent then Vice President

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Mubarak to Iraq to request aircraft and pilots for use in attacking Israeli surface-to-air missiles sites. Iraq provided the aircraft though they were already fighting the Kurds in the north. The Syrians requested Iraq's assistance just after start of the war saying Israel would occupy Syria without Iraq's help.

~~(S)~~ Regarding the reported failure of the Syrian military to "openly welcome" Iraqi forces in 1973, Hussein stated, "No one is as generous as Iraqis." Hussein was further asked for his comments regarding the failure/refusal of the Syrian military to provide Iraqi forces with maps, communications equipment, and other assistance needed to fight the war together. Hussein replied, "A loser does not know where his head and feet are. It was a difficult situation, to come together like this." Hussein postulated, "Perhaps the Syrians did not have maps." Iraqi officers were accustomed to different treatment in their own military ranks.

~~(S)~~ Iraq has always accepted Palestinian refugees into the country, during Hussein's time and previously. These influxes of refugees include after 1948 upon formation of Israel, after September, 1970 (Black September in Jordan), and in 1991 after the first Gulf War. Hussein stated, "We welcomed them, gave them jobs, and gave them the right to own land and a house." The latter policy regarding homes was in contradiction with the doctrine of the Arab League which did not permit Palestinians to own residences. In Hussein's opinion, Arab League members assumed that Palestinians would not leave if they owned their own residences. Hussein did not agree with this policy for "humanitarian reasons." When presented by Hussein, the Iraqi leadership agreed with this position. For Palestinians in Iraq, "this helped life be normal."

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Iraqi government built and/or rented homes for Palestinians from Iraqi landlords. Hussein stated, "We were concerned about everybody in Iraq. We would not have let them live on the streets. Things such as food, work, and a home are needed for the sake of pride." Hussein stated some people accused Iraq of trying to remove the Palestinians. Hussein added, on the contrary, we "could not kick a guest out."

~~(S)~~ Hussein does not remember whether the Iraqi government paid all or a portion of rent, for all or a certain

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amount of time, for the Palestinian housing in Iraq. Hussein has no knowledge of home owners suing the government for unpaid rent, particularly in the early to mid-1990s, and losing such a case to the government. Hussein stated, "If we promised to pay, we would have done it. If the case was lost, the government must not have promised to pay." Hussein denied there was a law permitting the government to "rent" homes without actually paying rent to the landlord. He said, "That's not true. There was no such law. That's rape or jungle law." Hussein asked to see the law on paper.

~~(S)~~ Hussein provided comments about the 1974 Rabat Summit where it is reported that the Iraqi government gave up its belief in an "armed struggle" for Palestine and accepted a "phased strategy." Hussein stated this was the first conference he had ever attended. Usually, the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs attended on behalf of the government. At the summit, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) presented a general strategy asking Jordan for the West Bank as a homeland. Previously, the West Bank and Jerusalem were under control of Jordan and its ruler King Hussein. Hussein stated, "We approved this after a speech by King Hussein." In Hussein's opinion, King Hussein did not object to the plan "but seem unconvinced." Also at this time, Iraq agreed that the PLO would be the only legal representative of Palestine.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that Palestinian groups, including Al-Fatah, had offices in Baghdad. In 1978, however, Al-Fatah closed its offices and reportedly distributed leaflets. Hussein does not know the details of the message on the leaflets but heard it was negative towards the Iraqi government. The relationship between the Iraqi government and Al-Fatah "was not good." Regarding the objectives of other Palestinian organizations, which seemed to differ from those of the PLO and Iraq, Hussein stated friction between individuals or groups regarding the same matter often results in differing ideas being put forth. According to Hussein, the Palestinians needed "central control." The individuals comprising the leadership of the various Palestinian groups were "not on the same page." As for the Iraqis, the leadership met and decided not to interfere in the internal affairs of the PLO. Hussein stated it was decided that Iraq would "help as we can." The Palestinians were told, however, the limitations of the Iraqi government. Thereafter, direction regarding Iraqi assistance to Palestinians,

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and limitations, was provided to all Iraqi government sectors. Hussein described relations with the the PLO during the period 1978-2003 as "good."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated representatives of the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) and Abu Nidal Organization (ANO) were present in Iraq at times. Hussein stated, "We accepted them as guests." They were directed not to conduct activities against Iraq and to refrain from terrorism. PLF and ANO members were told not to interfere in the internal affairs of the PLO. At one point, the ANO was warned to cease terrorist activities.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged the presence of Mohammed Abbas, aka Abu Abbas, in Iraq at some point. Hussein did not admit to specifically assisting Abbas. He stated, "If we accepted someone as a guest, we must help them. A guest cannot, however, demand what he wants for breakfast, lunch, and dinner." Hussein reiterated that Iraq considered the PLO as the official political organization for Palestine and all other groups were secondary.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was told the details of a videotaped meeting which took place approximately two years ago between Abbas and Tahir Jalil Habbush, Director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service. At the meeting, Abbas requested Iraqi assistance, including money, training, weapons, and transportation, to carry out missions to attack Israel. Hussein was told the videotape was seen by the interviewer. Hussein was questioned as to whether these actions planned against Israel constituted a legitimate defense of Palestine or terrorism, thereby exceeding the normal assistance provided to a guest. Hussein asked, "What did the Iraqi government do? If you have the recording, you know." Hussein stated that his position is one where attempts are made to regain all Arab lands, including those "raped and taken." He stated this is neither a secret nor is it something which brings shame. Hussein added, "If Habbush and Abbas met, that's something else. We call for a military struggle to regain Arab lands. The principles are the same as that which we have talked about before." Hussein continued, "If Abbas asked for these things, it does not mean we gave them to him. If Abbas carried out any attacks in Israel, that means we helped him. If he did not, we did not help him." When told Abbas carried out attacks in Israel, Hussein replied, "Those occurred before asking us for assistance. That was their choice." Hussein stated, "At

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any time, we have the ability and the right to help in the struggle. I'm not talking about Abbas, I'm talking about organizations in Palestine. Outsiders are not serious." Hussein asked for the answer provided by Habbush to Abbas. The interviewer told Hussein money was provided to Abbas, but not as much as requested. Hussein stated, "This is intelligence work. We have been open about Palestine."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was questioned whether assistance to Abbas would help achieve the goals of Palestinians or whether it would work against such aims. Hussein stated since he was a "young struggler" in the Ba'ath Party, he believed any organization should fight from the inside, not the outside. Per Hussein, any attempts from the outside are just "talk" and "not serious." Hussein suggested further details regarding Abbas could be obtained from Habbush or from further review of the videotape of the meeting between the two.

~~(S)~~ Regarding whether the Director of the IIS would meet without the approval of the Iraqi leadership to discuss such a matter with Abbas, Hussein replied, "Does the American Director of Intelligence call President Bush every time before meeting someone?" Hussein agreed that the President, in both the United States and Iraq, sets policy for all branches of government. Hussein stated, although Abbas reportedly asked the Iraqi IIS Director for 1-2 million dollars according to the interviewer, he would not have given him even "\$10,000." Hussein added, "Any Palestinian who wanted to train and to go fight for Palestine, I said train him. Money and weapons are different from training." Because of sanctions against Iraq, the government could not offer as much assistance as previously provided. Hussein stated, "If the IIS had the ability, it is not wrong as long as the struggle is on the inside."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was questioned whether Iraq's stated position of recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of Palestine conflicted with support provided to other groups and individuals including Abbas. Hussein responded, "I didn't say I helped Abbas. Don't put words in my mouth." Hussein added, "I think the questions should be in the context of a dialogue, not an interrogation." Hussein continued saying, "If the IIS helped Abbas, and he fought for Palestine, that is not wrong. If a person says he wants to struggle against Israel, and that person is not officially representing Palestinians, there is no conflict

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with Iraqi policy." Hussein said any such person who stated he wanted to "negotiate" would not be supported by Iraq as that is the role of Arafat and the PLO.

(S) At the end of interview, Hussein was asked about his movements when hostilities began in March, 2003. Hussein stated he remained in Baghdad until April 10 or 11, 2003, whereupon it appeared the city was about to fall. Prior to his departure from Baghdad, he held a final meeting with the senior Iraqi leadership and told them "we will struggle in secret." Thereafter, he departed Baghdad and began gradually "dispersing" his bodyguards, telling them they had completed their duty, so as not to draw attention.

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Federal Bureau of Investigation

In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 8, 2004

Interview Session Number: 2  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
Arabic/English Translation: SSA [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 8, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated the farm where he was captured in December, 2003 was the same location he stayed in 1959 after fleeing Baghdad upon participating in a failed assassination attempt on then Iraqi President Qassem.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked whether the decision to go to war against Iran in September, 1980 was based on threats from Iran or whether the war was a means of reclaiming Arab/Iraqi territory, specifically the Shatt-al-Arab Waterway. Hussein stated, "We consider the war as having started on September 4, not September 22, as the Iranians state." Hussein then provided an example of a farmer who is your neighbor next door. Hussein prefers to use farming/rural examples as they have special meaning to him. One day, the neighbor's son beats up your son. The next day, the neighbor's son bothers your cows. Subsequently, the neighbor's son damages your farmland by disturbing the irrigation system. If all these things have occurred, eventually, after enough incidents, you approach your neighbor, tell him each transgression by event and ask him to stop. Usually, a warning or approach to the neighbor is enough to stop this behavior. With Iran, however, this approach by Iraq did not work. Iran, in Hussein's opinion, was in violation of the 1975 "Algiers Agreement" concerning the waterway. Furthermore, Iran was also deemed to have interfered in Iraqi politics, also a violation of the treaty. In Hussein's opinion, this left Iraq no choice but

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to fight. Thereafter, Iraq fought the war and sacrificed so that interference by Iran in Iraq would end.

~~(S)~~ Hussein provided some thoughts about the mindset of the Iranian leadership, specifically Ayatollah Khomeini, and the Iranian decision to fight the war. When Khomeini came to power in 1979, he had two things which "interfered" with his mind. One, he was a religious fanatic who thought all leaders were like the Shah of Iran, a person easily toppled. Khomeini thought since he removed the Shah so easily he could do the same elsewhere including Iraq. Second, Khomeini had a "complex" about leaving/being kicked out of Iraq previously in the late 1970s. Khomeini, exiled from Iran, had been a "guest" of Iraq who was "given shelter" in Najaf. While there, he began speaking out against the Shah and the Iranian government. Khomeini, in Hussein's opinion, was not respecting the written agreement (Algiers Agreement) between Iraq and Iran and was interfering in internal Iranian affairs. The Iraqi government informed Khomeini of their position. They also told him "you are our guest, no one can ask you to leave or for you to be handed over." The Shah had, in fact, tried to get Hussein to turn over Khomeini to Iran. In Arab culture, one can not "give up" a guest.

~~(S)~~ Khomeini refused to cease his activities against the Shah and the Iranian government. Khomeini stated that if his practices were against Iraqi policy, he would leave. Thereafter, he attempted to depart to Kuwait but was refused entry. Iraq allowed him to return for three or four days and complied with his request for assistance in traveling to another country. Khomeini then traveled to Paris, France.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated he does not regret Iraq's treatment of Khomeini. When asked whether Khomeini ignored the gratitude of Iraq upon return from Kuwait, a step which could have resulted in Iraq's refusal to admit him and subsequent transfer to Iran, Hussein stated, "No. It would not have changed the situation. The people did not want the Shah." Khomeini became a symbol for the people of Iran after departing Iraq because of his age and because he had been "kicked out" of Iran. Hussein only stated "maybe" when questioned whether Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammad Sadr, a prominent Shia cleric executed in Iraq in 1980, may have been such a symbol. Hussein added he himself was a symbol as one could find pictures of Hussein inside houses and elsewhere in Iraq.

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~~(S)~~ Khomeini believed the Shia population in southern Iraq would follow him, especially during the war with Iraq. But, according to Hussein, "They did not welcome him." In fact, the Shia remained loyal to Iraq and fought the Iranians.

~~(S)~~ Hussein acknowledged that the Iranian military in 1980 was weak and "lacked leadership" as most of the high-ranking officers had been removed upon change of the Iranian leadership from the Shah to Khomeini. This, however, did not impact on the decision to engage in war with Iran at that moment. Hussein stated, "If the Shah's army still existed, we would have defeated them in the first month." Under Khomeini, despite lacking leadership, the Iranian military, including the army and the Revolutionary Guard, "advanced in thousands" against Iraqi forces. The Iraqi army fought bravely, especially at the borders.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was asked whether assassination attempts against Iraqi government officials prior to the conflict, allegedly at the hands of Iranian-backed groups, including Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and Minister of Culture and Information Latif Nayyif Jasim, affected the decision to go to war with Iran. Hussein stated there were "540 assaults" on Iraq by Iran before the war. 249 of these "assaults" included air incursions or raids. Iraq presented this information to the United Nations. Iran blocked the Shatt-al-Arab Waterway and sank Iraqi and foreign ships. Before September 29, 1980, Iran bombed Iraqi oil refineries in Basra and other cities in southern Iraq. The assassination attempts against Aziz and Jasim, and others, were among the many incidents leading up to war with Iran.

~~(S)~~ When asked the objective of the war, Hussein replied, "Ask Iran. They began the war. I have explained all the reasons for the war before." Upon repeating the question, Hussein stated the objective was "to have Iran not interfere in our internal affairs." Hussein repeated some information previously provided including the fact that he believed Iran violated the treaty of 1975 (Algiers Agreement). Iran occupied the entire Shatt-al-Arab Waterway, while the agreement stated their right to only half. Iran did not respond to diplomatic communications regarding these facts.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Iraqi forces initially succeeded and occupied cities and territory in southern Iran just across the

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border including areas in and near Muhamra, Ahwaz, and Dosful. Iraqi forces did not push further into Iran because the immediate objective was to stop artillery attacks from Iran which emanated from areas near the border.

~~(S)~~ After approximately two years, Iraqi forces were pushed back and the war became defensive for Hussein's military. When questioned why the war became defensive for Iraq, Hussein stated that "one can not plan for the Iraqi army the same as for the American army." From a military viewpoint, plans are made according to capability. The military agrees that when supply routes are lengthened, problems arise. Hussein stated, "The soldier of today is not the same as the soldier of 100 years ago." They are part of a "universal group" hearing and seeing things on the television and radio. The soldier is "part of the world" and is "affected" by this. If ordered to counterattack, the "winning" soldier will push to the objective and beyond. Hussein agreed that the later Iraqi offensive stage of the war in 1986-87 saw many successes, including the capture of three-fourths of Iranian tanks and half of the artillery and armored personnel carriers.

~~(S)~~ Hussein discussed further the reasoning behind not advancing further into Iran. He repeated that Iraq had recovered enough territory, removing the threat of Iranian artillery, in the early years of the war. Hussein said, "If we went deep inside Iran, they would think we wanted something else." He added, "We did not face a regular army, which is easier to plan against." Hussein further stated that for many Iraqi soldiers, this was their first combat experience. Many were "pumped up" especially with the early successes into Iranian territory. Within a few days, however, many soldiers thought "Why am I here?" As confirmed to Hussein by the Iraqi military leaders, many soldiers preferred to defend the borders and remain in Iraq. Withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Iranian territory should have occurred before this change in mentality took place. Some military commanders wanted to remain, others wanted to withdraw. After two years of war, some Iraqi military leaders felt Iran had "learned its lesson" and recommended withdrawal. Hussein respected information from the military commanders and ordered withdrawal of Iraqi forces.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, normally, defensive operations are not "good from a tactical standpoint" nor are they good for the

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soldiers' morale. Hussein said, "If a soldier does not see logic, he will not perform as well or be obedient. If he accepts the task at hand as logical, he will be obedient. A soldier must be convinced, otherwise discipline is a problem." Hussein commented about the present mental state of American soldiers in Iraq. He said, "If you asked the American soldier, who came to Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction, but none could be found, and who came to remove the leaders of the Hussein dictatorship, who are all in jail now, but are replaced with other dictators, whether he wanted to stay or go, he would say go."

~~(S)~~ When asked whether the use of chemical weapons by Iraq against Iran during the defensive period of the war occurred only through necessity, i.e., Iraq would have lost the war without such use, Hussein responded, "I do not have an answer for that. I am not going to answer." When asked whether he thought Iraq was going to lose the war with Iran, particularly after 1982 and during the 1984-86 time frame, Hussein responded, "No. Not for a second. I said this on television. I said this in five letters I sent to Iran." In the letters, Hussein outlined the strengths of the Iraqi military. Hussein stated some Iraqi commanders did not like the fact that this type of information was included in letters to Iran. Iranian leaders thought Hussein was lying, while Iraqis believed him. Returning to Iraqi chemical weapons use, Hussein stated, "I will not be cornered or caught on some technicality. It will not do you any good. The United States has paid dearly for its mistakes here in Iraq and throughout the world and will continue to pay for its mistakes all over the world."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Iran did not "get the message" after 1982 when Iraq pulled back to its borders. He stated, "If you do not break their heads, they will not understand."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Iraq "did not owe much money" after the war with Iran. Iraq had received aid from Arab countries, which Hussein believed to be aid and not loans. After the war, however, these countries "changed their minds" and demanded repayment. Some countries viewed Iraq as a military threat. Iran was not viewed as a military threat, as its forces were devastated by the war. Hussein laughed at this point.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein stated Iraq agreed to a United Nations resolution on September 28, 1980 calling for a cessation of hostilities with Iran. Iran, however, did not agree to this resolution. Hussein added that Iraq also agreed to UN Resolution 598 in 1987 calling for an end to the war. Iran, again, did not agree to this resolution. Iraq, in fact, attempted numerous times throughout the war to engage Iran in discussion in order to stop the fighting. Hussein stated "we did this when we did not have to" for the good of the people and for humanity. Iran only accepted terms of a cease fire in 1988 "after they lost the war."

~~(S)~~ Regarding UN findings about Iraq's use of chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War, Hussein stated, "History is written and will not change. No one can stop history from being written." Hussein pointed out that Iran used chemical weapons first, at Muhamra (which is Khoramshahar in Iran), in September/October, 1981. When asked whether Iraq had to use chemical weapons for defensive reasons, Hussein responded, "I am not going to answer, no matter how you put the question."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, "I will discuss everything unless it hurts my people, my friends, or the army." Hussein gave details of an incident in 1964 involving Ahmad Hasan Al-Bakr, General Secretary of the Ba'ath Party. Bakr and Hussein, who was chief of the military branch of the Ba'ath at that time, were arrested for plotting a coup against then Iraqi President Aref. Hussein stated he admitted full responsibility for the plot and could not have provided information against anyone else.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated, "It is not fair for someone in charge to blame others. If someone says Saddam told me to do it, that is not a problem for me and does not hurt me."

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In Reply, Please Refer to  
File No.

Baghdad Operations Center  
February 7, 2004

Interview Session Number: 1  
Interview Conducted by: SSA George L. Piro  
SSA [REDACTED]  
Arabic/English Translation: [REDACTED]

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~~(S)~~ Saddam Hussein (High Value Detainee #1) was interviewed on February 7, 2004 at a military detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), Baghdad, Iraq. Hussein provided the following information:

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated he has served the Iraqi people for a very long time. He considers his greatest accomplishments to be the social programs for the citizens of Iraq and improvements in other sectors of the economy including enhancements to education, the health care system, industry, agriculture, and other areas that generally enhanced the way of life for Iraqis.

~~(S)~~ In 1968, Iraqi people "barely had anything." Food was scarce, both in rural villages as well as in cities. Farmland was neglected and agricultural methods were primitive. The Iraqi economy depended entirely on oil production, with most being exported from Iraq by foreign companies and not controlled by the government. As the country of Iraq manufactured very few products, most goods had to be imported. The health care system was "primitive" and the mortality rate was very high, particularly among the poor. The infant mortality rate was very high, estimated at 40-50 percent, with many deaths occurring during pregnancy or delivery. The literacy rate was around twenty-seven percent, with those classified as "literate" often not capable of true proficiency in either skill. Roads were almost non-existent in rural areas and "very bad" in the cities of Iraq. Limited educational opportunities existed at the university level, even in Baghdad. Many cities had no college whatsoever. Generally, only wealthy individuals could afford to send their children to a university.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein improved all of the areas previously discussed. He considers this his greatest accomplishment and "service" to the Iraqi people.

~~(S)~~ In response to a question regarding Hussein's own mistakes, Hussein agreed that all humans make mistakes, and only God is free of error. He noted that the interviewer was "smart" and it appeared he had read reports from Hussein's previous interviews. Hussein stated, "Perhaps, a conversation between two such educated people will not be useful or successful." If one says he is perfect, he is saying he is like God. Hussein added that not all of his efforts were viewed as successful in some people's eyes. Hussein compared this evaluation of himself by others and the existence of differing viewpoints to his own views about the American system of government, of which he is "not convinced." He pointed out that approximately 30 million people live in poverty in America, but US residents do not consider this a "crime." Hussein stated he would never accept that for Iraq. When prompted by the interviewer a second time regarding Hussein's own mistakes, he asked, "Do you think I would tell my enemy if I made a mistake?" Hussein said that he would not identify mistakes he had made to an enemy, like America. He pointed out that he does not consider the interviewer an enemy, nor the American people, but the American system of government.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated it is not only important what people say or think about him now but what they think in the future, 500 or 1000 years from now. The most important thing, however, is what God thinks. If God believes something, He will convince the people to believe. If God does not agree, it does not matter what the people think. Hussein added that a "traitor" provided information which led to his capture. As a "guest" at the location and as an Iraqi, he should not have been given up to US forces. The grandchildren of this "traitor" will hold him accountable and tell this to future generations.

~~(S)~~ In the future, Hussein believes he will be known for fairness and as having "faced oppression." Ultimately, what the Iraqis think will be up to them. Hussein stated Iraqis would not compare leaders of the pre-Islamic era to the Islamic era.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes Iraqi citizens were able to exercise their rights to self-govern as guaranteed by the interim

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Constitution in 1990. This occurred because the people had a leader and a government to lead them.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes Iraq "will not die." Iraq is a great nation now, as it has been at times throughout history. Nations generally "go to the top" only once. Iraq, however, has been there many times, before and after Islam. Iraq is the only nation like this in the history of the world. This "gift" was given to the Iraqi people by God. When Iraqi people fall, they rise again. Hussein believes the Iraqi people "will take matters into their own hands," rule themselves, and, with God, decide what is right. Hussein hopes that Iraq will advance in all areas, financial, religious, etc. He added that, as a humanitarian, he hoped the same for the American people.

~~(S)~~ Hussein was quoted a passage from the book "Zabibah and the King," commonly attributed as his writing, where the deputies shout, "Long live Zabibah. Long live the people. Long live the army." The deputies do not, however, shout "Long live the king." Hussein was asked whether the Iraqi people will forget or fail to shout for him, to which he replied no. He said, "It's in God's hands." Hussein emphasized the king is not the main subject of the book, rather the people. He stated God comes first, then the people. Hussein added Jesus Christ was considered "from the people" as Mary was of the people and Christ lived among the people. Being faithful is a cherished thing in life, being a traitor is the worst thing. Hussein stated, "God wanted to tell us don't be surprised when people are traitors to you." Hussein ended this portion of the discussion by saying "a prisoner can not do anything for the people." He said he still has to have faith in God and repeated "It's in God's hands."

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated the National Progressive Front, a political party, first existed as the National Front from 1970-1974. The National Front consisted of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the Communist Party, and the Ba'ath Party. Political parties express differences in Iraq as occurs in other countries. Some groups, including the Kurds, did not believe in socialism along the same ideological lines as the Ba'ath. In 1991, the National Progressive Front never actually came into being because of failure to pass the Constitution which was due to the first Gulf War.

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~~(S)~~ Hussein considered any individual who was faithful to Iraq, and to the people, to be a part of the Ba'ath. The Ba'ath takes responsibility for successes and mistakes. In 1989 and again in 2002, Hussein attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince his "colleagues" of the need for multiple political parties in Iraq. In Hussein's opinion, one party was not good for Iraq. Hussein stated, "Life does not accept only one idea. It accepts only one God." Hussein continued saying that a political system similar to America's, with multiple parties, would cause "too much commotion" for the Iraqi people and they would have to be forced to accept it. Hussein said, "I wish there were parties other than the Ba'ath." Differences, from family through the people to the government, are good. Hussein ended this portion of the discussion by stating, "Currently, the only political parties existing in Iraq are the ones with the weapons."

~~(S)~~ Hussein was quoted another passage from "Zabibah and the King" which states, "I'm a great leader. You must obey me. Not only that, you must love me." He was then asked whether a leader can obtain greatness through his achievements for his people or demand greatness through fear. Hussein responded that fear will not make a ruler and will not make people love a ruler. Love comes through communication. The "author" of this book is comparing this King to past kings. He did not want to emphasize or advocate the idea of the monarchy to the people as the "author" does not approve of this form of government. Thus, the King died and Zabibah lived, as a symbol of the people.

~~(S)~~ Hussein believes people will love him more after he passes away than they do now. People are resisting the occupation of Iraq, now and before, under the "banners" of Hussein. Now, however, Hussein is not in power and is in prison.

~~(S)~~ Hussein stated people love someone for what they have done. During his Presidency and before, he accomplished much for Iraq. He concluded a peace agreement with Barzani (the Kurds) in the north in 1970. Hussein nationalized the Iraqi oil industry in 1972. He supported the 1973 war against Israel in Egypt and Syria. Iraq survived eight years of war with Iran from 1980-1988 and the first Gulf War shortly thereafter. Iraq lived through 13-14 years of a boycott. Hussein asked whether the boycott still existed, and was told no. Despite all the hardships and issues endured by Iraq, one hundred percent of the

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people voted for Hussein in the last elections. In Hussein's opinion, they still supported their leader.

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